

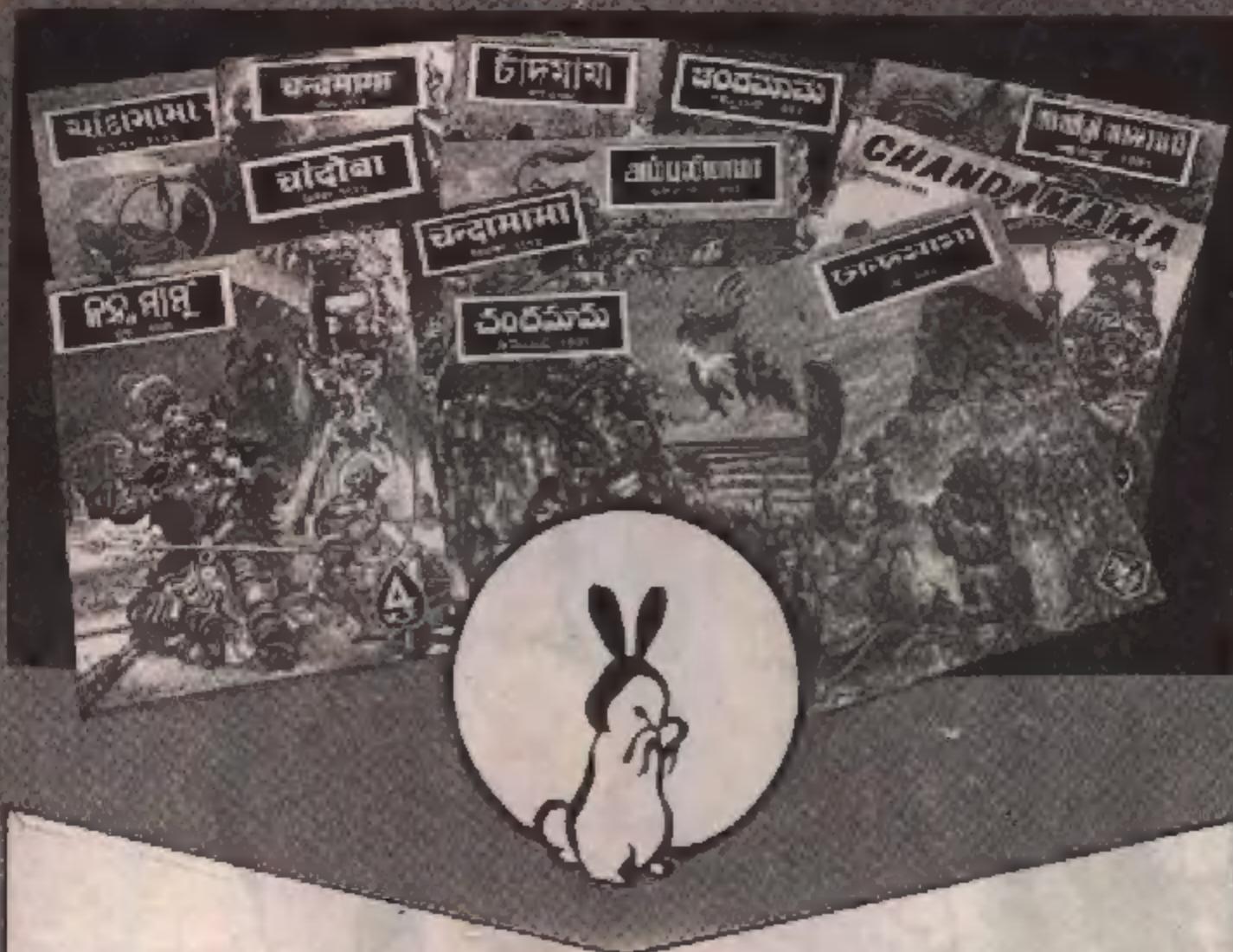
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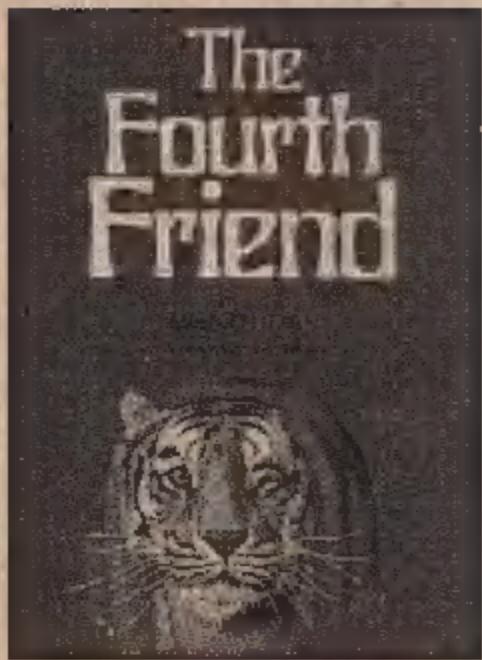
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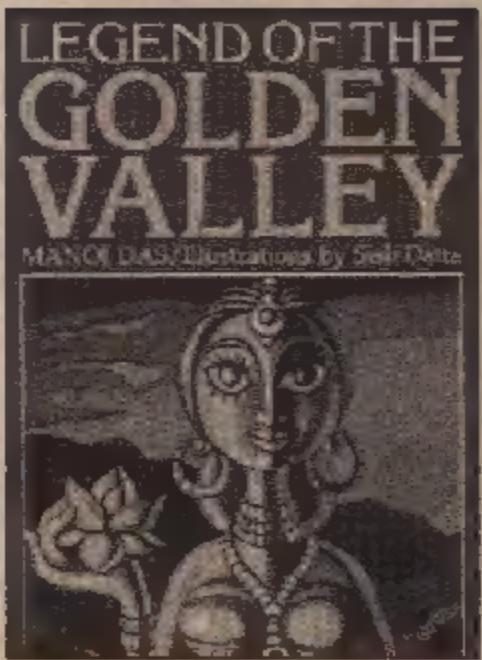
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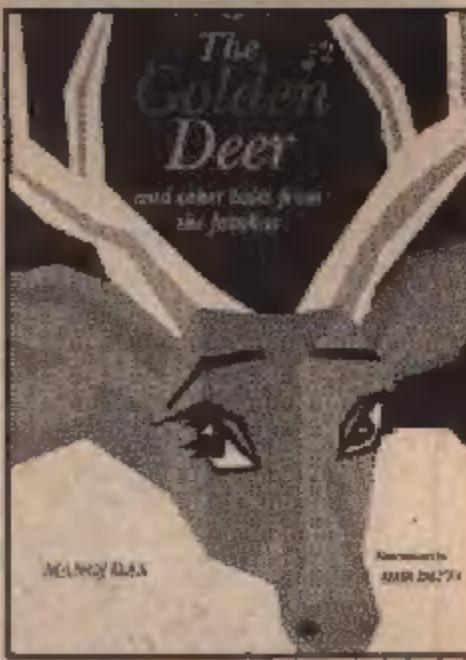
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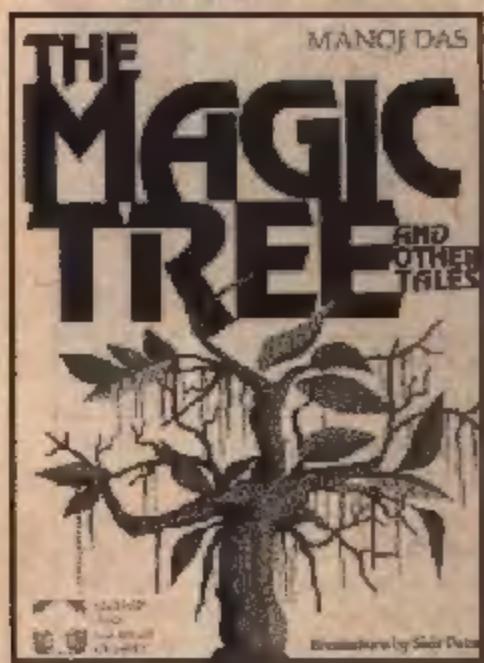
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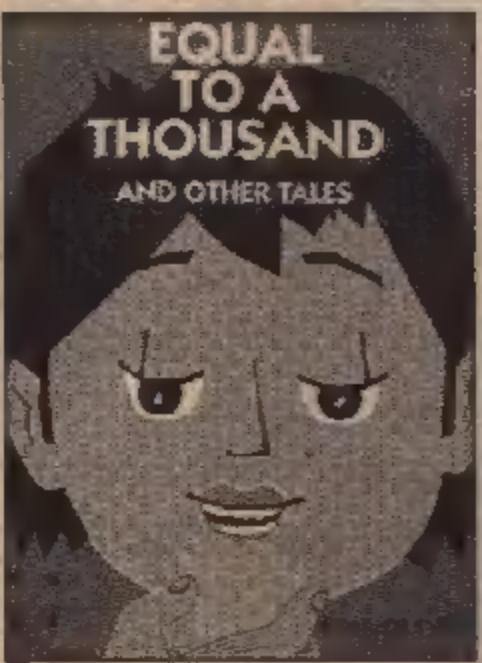
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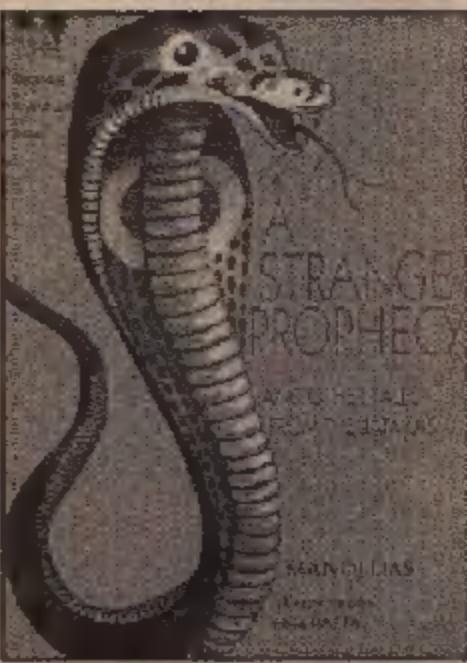
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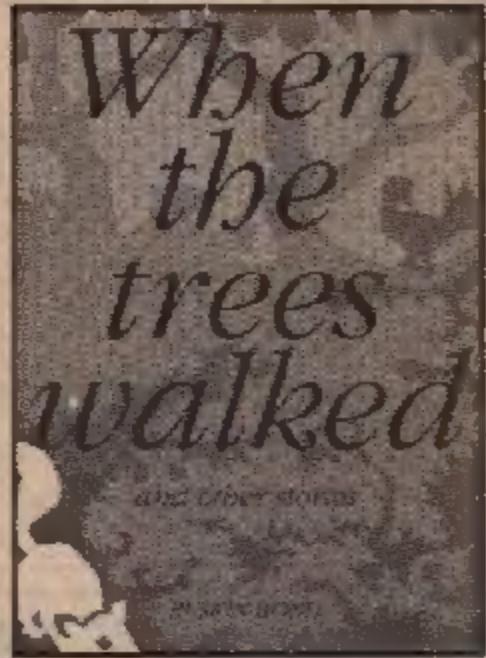
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**THE SAGA OF 1857 :** The gathering clouds are about to burst forth into a thunderstorm, now that Rani Lakshmibai and her childhood mentor Nana Sahib have joined hands. Will the entire Hindustan go up in flames?

**THE VIRAGO OF VEERPURI :** The wizardry of the Yuvaraja turns the sanyasini into Princess Vairamukhi of Mahendragiri who is invited to the palace of Veerpuri by none other than Queen Suryaprabha herself. Inside the palace, the princess is given all the礼。 The queen, who is carried away by the beauty of Vairamukhi, eagerly awaits the return of her son, Prince Veeran. They would make an ideal pair, she feels. But Vairamukhi's moves are totally different. Yuvaraja wants her to facilitate the entry of his men into the palace. The queen is in danger. Will King Soorasan or the prince save her?

**MAHABHARATA :** When Duryodhana approaches Krishna with ulterior motives, the Lord decides to show him that he is not alone. In his Viswaroopam, Duryodhana watches not only the Kauravas, their relations and friends, but the Pandavas and their allies. Not only they, but the entire Universe. For a moment, the Kaurava prince is blinded by the awe-inspiring sight. When he comes back into his own, he is once again blind-blind to the advice, pleadings, and warnings of his peers. Krishna makes just one more effort to avoid war. But Karna says he will not abandon Duryodhana, even when he is told that he is really an elder brother of the Pandavas.

**THEY STOOD UP TO THE BRITISH :** The Raja of Pazhassi is featured in this month's episode.

**PLUS** all the regular features, including COASTAL JOURNEYS.

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Founder: CHAKRAPANI

Controlling Editor : NAGI REDDI

## A Golden Coincidence

In the previous issue of your magazine you found an illustrated feature on a rather unusual event in the history of India. That was about a rebellion against the early British colonialists by thousands of ascetics. They sought to free the country from the foreigners because for them, the country was the Mother. It is interesting to note that many of our great patriots looked upon India as sacred as the deity. This idea found an inspiring expression in Sri Aurobindo (1872-1950), who once wrote in a private letter which the British police made public: "Mother India is not a piece of earth; She is a Power, a Godhead..."

Perhaps many of you know that he was the first son of Mother India to demand complete freedom for her. We achieved our independence on his birthday - the 15th of August.

This year India as well as the world is celebrating his 125th Birth Anniversary which coincides with the 50th year of our Independence.

Sri Aurobindo was a great visionary, who believed that if we aspire collectively, we, the mankind, can evolve into a godly race. Let us share his optimism while remembering him with gratitude.



# Treatment with a difference



Once upon a time there lived a king who was very fat indeed. So plump was he that all the doors of the palace that he had to pass through were widened to suit to his girth. The slightest exercise fatigued him. Four strong and muscular men always helped him to get up from his throne and from his couch.

"Oh! Something must be done at once! If I thus continue to blow up, a day may come when I may just burst like a balloon!" thought the king to himself, wiping some beads of perspiration from his face.

So the best doctors of the land were summoned and asked to cure the king of his obesity. But alas, all

their knowledge, skills, and efforts were of no avail.

The whole realm fell into a great dilemma! Emissaries were sent to the wide, wide world to find a solution to his problem.

One day, a simple old man appeared in the royal court and announced, "Your Majesty, I know of your predicament and also know how to rescue you from it."

"Welcome, welcome, my good friend!" exclaimed the king, struggling to get up in excitement with the help of his stalwarts.

Alas, in the process, the throne stuck fast to him and came off the ground. For it seems, while the king



sat on it, he had added to his girth and the throne had already grown small for him.

"Tarry awhile, Your Majesty! I have a condition before I take up the case," put in the stranger.

"What is it? Be quick and start the treatment forthwith!" uttered the king impatiently, gesturing his assistants to pull the throne off his royal person.

"My lord, I am not only a physician but also an astrologer. First I will have to find out from the stars and the planets whether your life is long enough for this treatment to produce the desired result."

"Please proceed, I give you a day's time, but no more," cautioned the king.

The next day, at the crack of dawn, the wise old man arrived at the palace and presenting himself before the king

said, with a sorrowful face, "O King, the stars and the planets tell me that only three months and seven days are left of your Majesty's life on this blessed earth! To tell you the truth, this period is too short for my treatment to bear fruit. Please forgive me."

"What? On...ly three mon...ths and seve...nn dd.. days!" exclaimed the king almost petrified, his mouth half open.

"Yes, Your Majesty, only three months and seven days are all that is left of your life. If you have any misgivings, then please keep me confined in your palace. But don't forget to instruct your men to set me free at the end of the period, naturally, only if my words prove true and only if you are no more!" requested the stranger.

So the king kept the old man confined in his palace. But the dread of



his approaching death made the king very very sad indeed. He gave up all pleasures and even stopped relishing good food which was once his delightful passion. Day by day as his grief and anxiety increased, his fatness decreased quite proportionately.

Three months passed by and four of the next seven days too elapsed, and a nervous and sorrowful king sent for the wise old man and said to him, "Only three more days are left of my life according to your prediction. Now, what do you have to say?"

"Your Majesty, how can I foretell one's destiny? I know not the duration of my own life. How then can I predict the death of others?" replied the old man.

The king looked at him with surprise.

"So, what you have predicted about my life has no meaning?" he asked.

"All that I aimed at was to make our king lose some of his fat. I knew very well that nothing makes a man

lean and thin so much as sorrow and anxiety. My predicting your death was only a ruse to bring about the desired effect. Now, look at thy self, O King!"

The king walked up to the giant mirror and examined himself. Lo and behold, he was unable to believe his eyes. "Who am I?" he asked. For indeed, he had grown lean and handsome.

"May I now ask Your Majesty, whether he has reached his desired goal and whether his health has not shown an all round improvement?" asked the wise old man with a gentle chuckle.

The king, on learning that after all he was not to die so soon and now that he also looked like a young prince, became very joyful. He applauded the stranger for his cleverness and not only did he reward him handsomely but appointed him as his close adviser.

— Retold by Anup Kishore Das





## THE VIRAGO OF VEERPURI

*The story so far: The chance arrival in Mahendragiri, of Vajreshwari, daughter of Marthandvarma, the army commander of Veerpuri, is taken advantage of by the Yuvaraja to wreak vengeance on that kingdom. To the people of Mahendragiri, he is the 'Raja', as his brother, who is the real king, is in no mood to rule the country. Raja's physical disability prompts him to acquire mysterious powers through magic, wizardry, and witchcraft. He turns Vajreshwari into Princess Vairamukhi and sends her to Veerpuri as a sanyasini. The people of Veerpuri flock to the 'Mata' who endears herself to them. One of her callers is Marthandvarma, who is grieved over the sudden disappearance of his daughter. He invites 'Mata' to his residence hoping that she might offer some clues to the whereabouts of Vajreshwari. The sanyasini, under instructions from Raja, succeeds in administering poison to the army commander. Vairamukhi-turned-sanyasini does not realise that her victim is her own father. Who is to be the next?*

Veerpuri woke up to the shocking news of the death of the army commander. He had never complained of any particular ailment, though the frequent journeys to the borders to ensure that his soldiers there were in fine mettle had begun to tell upon his health. Ever since his daughter disappeared during a hunting trip with her brother Vijaykrishna, he had not

stirred out of the kingdom to await the receipt of some news brought by his soldiers, who had fanned out in search of the young maiden. Everybody knew that he was, therefore, a worried man.

However, it was the presence of another body—that of his carriage-driver—in the same room that baffled the guards on duty at the commander's residence. One of them saw the



carriage unusually parked near the side entrance—and not ■ the porch, where he normally boarded or mounted his horse. There was no driver to take care of the vehicle or the horse which was found in harness. He thought the driver might have gone in to tell the commander that the carriage was ready to take him wherever he wished to go.

The guard went in to enquire whether the commander needed any assistance. It was then that he ■ upon the two bodies on the floor at ■ distance apart. He also noticed two empty glasses on the table. What did they contain? Did they drink the stuff together? Or did someone force the contents on them?

Word was taken to the commander's son, Vijayakrishna. He asked the guards to send a messenger to Prime Minister Bodheshwar. He immediately left for the commander's residence, where he called on Vijayakrishna and expressed his condolences. "Has the king been informed?" queried Vijaykrishna. "And how shall we inform Vajreshwari? But, then, where's she? Father was missing her very much. Did he get any tragic news about her? Or some report that must have hastened his death? Was he getting ready to go out in the hope of meeting her?" The young man seemed to have many more such questions to ask, but desisted from expressing his doubts when he saw the Prime Minister in ■ contemplative mood and not replying him.

Bodheshwar was himself churning the questions in his mind, without finding any answer or any clue to the sudden demise of the commander. He remembered that Marthandvarma was away from the capital when his daughter disappeared. On his return, Bodheshwar had called on him and tried to console him. After that he had had no occasion to meet the commander.

The Prime Minister took stock of the situation and after arranging for the funeral, rushed to the palace to inform King Soorasen of the passing away of Marthandvarma, who was his brother-in-law.

As the king listened to Bodheshwar's narration of the event, his thoughts went back to the royal astrologer's warning some years earlier that the kingdom might pass through evil days. Till the three children—his son and a daughter each to the Prime Minister and the army commander, who were all born almost at the same time—grew up, Veerapuri enjoyed a peaceful time. However, things had started taking place, marking an end to that peaceful period. First, it was the mysterious disappearance of Vajreshwari. Now, her father's death under equally mysterious circumstances. Was some danger lurking around Vijaykrishna? He was concerned about the youth, as he was not only his brother-in-law's son, but had turned out to be a companion and confidante of his son Prince Veersen.

Queen Suryaprabha was inconsolable on hearing the news of her brother's death. She had been greatly upset after Vajreshwari was reported missing and shared a quiet grief with her brother. Both Marthandvarma and Suryaprabha were nourishing hopes of her early return, when many others had taken her to be no more, as there was no trace of her anywhere in the kingdom. The queen was sure that her brother had died, pining for his daughter, rather than of any other reason. However she, too, could not piece



together the mystery of the second dead body in the same room and the presence of two empty glasses and the tray of fruits lying untouched.

Between King Soorsen and Prime Minister Bodheshwar, they decided that Vijaykrishna should be kept away from Veerapuri for some time. Marthandvarma's two brothers—Mahendravarma of Senapuri and Surendravarma of Saptagiri—who had come to Veerapuri to attend the funeral proposed that Vijaykrishna should visit the two kingdoms where his father had been reluctant to send him because of the circumstances under which Marthandvarma had to leave Saptagiri, with no chances of succeeding their father Rudrapratap.



Vijaykrishna pleaded with King Soorasen to send Prince Veersen along with him. The king readily agreed — he thought it was time the prince acquainted himself with the state of affairs in other kingdoms and established friendly relations with them by the time he himself took over the reins in Veerpuri.

★ ★ ★

The sudden developments in Veerpuri did not affect the routine of Vairamukhi. She and Ragini would visit the Kali temple in the morning and by the time they came out, people would have gathered to pay their obeisance to the 'Mata'. Ragini would take her to the banyan tree where the sanyasini met the devotees, and leave

her there to sit in meditation or talk to the people. Before dusk came, Ragini came there once again to escort her back to their modest abode. As usual, food for Vairamukhi — from the temple, brought by the priest after he completed the rituals in the morning and closed the temple for the day. In the afternoon, Vairamukhi would lie down to take rest.

For a few days, she did not hear Raja's voice to tell her what she should do next. One afternoon she was not sleeping, when the familiar voice told her : "You've succeeded in your first assignment and thus qualified to take up the next. The role of a sanyasini is over and tomorrow you'll be Princess Vairamukhi. Await more instructions!"

Vairamukhi sat up and rubbed her eyes to see whether any transformation had taken place on her person. No. She still had the ochre robe of the sanyasini. So, she decided to remain beneath the banyan tree, waiting for commands from Raja. She was alert, but she did not hear the voice again.

Soon it was dusk, but there was no sign of Ragini to take her back. As it grew dark and darker, Vairamukhi became restless. She did not see a man approaching, but only heard him. "Please follow me, princess!" It was one of those masked men. She followed him meekly. He took her through streets unfamiliar to her, and stopped in front of a huge mansion.

He did not have to knock on the door, because immediately the door opened and out stepped Ragini. She was attired in a dazzling dress.

"Come in, princess!" she said, as she led her inside. Strangely, there was ■ other soul in that place. Ragini closed the door from behind and took Vairamukhi to a richly decorated room. "Your bath is ready, princess. And your clothes have also been laid. I shall help you dress up."

The clothes, Vairamukhi soon found, were really deserving of a princess. While she was putting them on, Ragini announced casually, "Tomorrow we'll be going to the palace. We'll be guests of Queen Suryaprabha."

"Guests of the queen?" Vairamukhi expressed an unbelievable surprise.

"Yes, the queen will receive the Princess of Mahendragiri!" confirmed Ragini.

Vairamukhi thought for ■ while. It must be the beginning of Raja's next assignment for her. "I'm glad you'll go with me, Ragini." That was all what she could say at that time.

Next morning, two palanquins arrived in front of the palatial house where the two were staying. Vairamukhi got into one of them, while Ragini climbed into the other. Both were clad in gorgeous dresses behoving of a prosperous kingdom. As the eight palanquin-bearers did not wear any mask, Vairamukhi took them to be from the Veerpuri palace. She did not know that they had been sent by Raja from Mahendragiri.

When the palanquins reached the

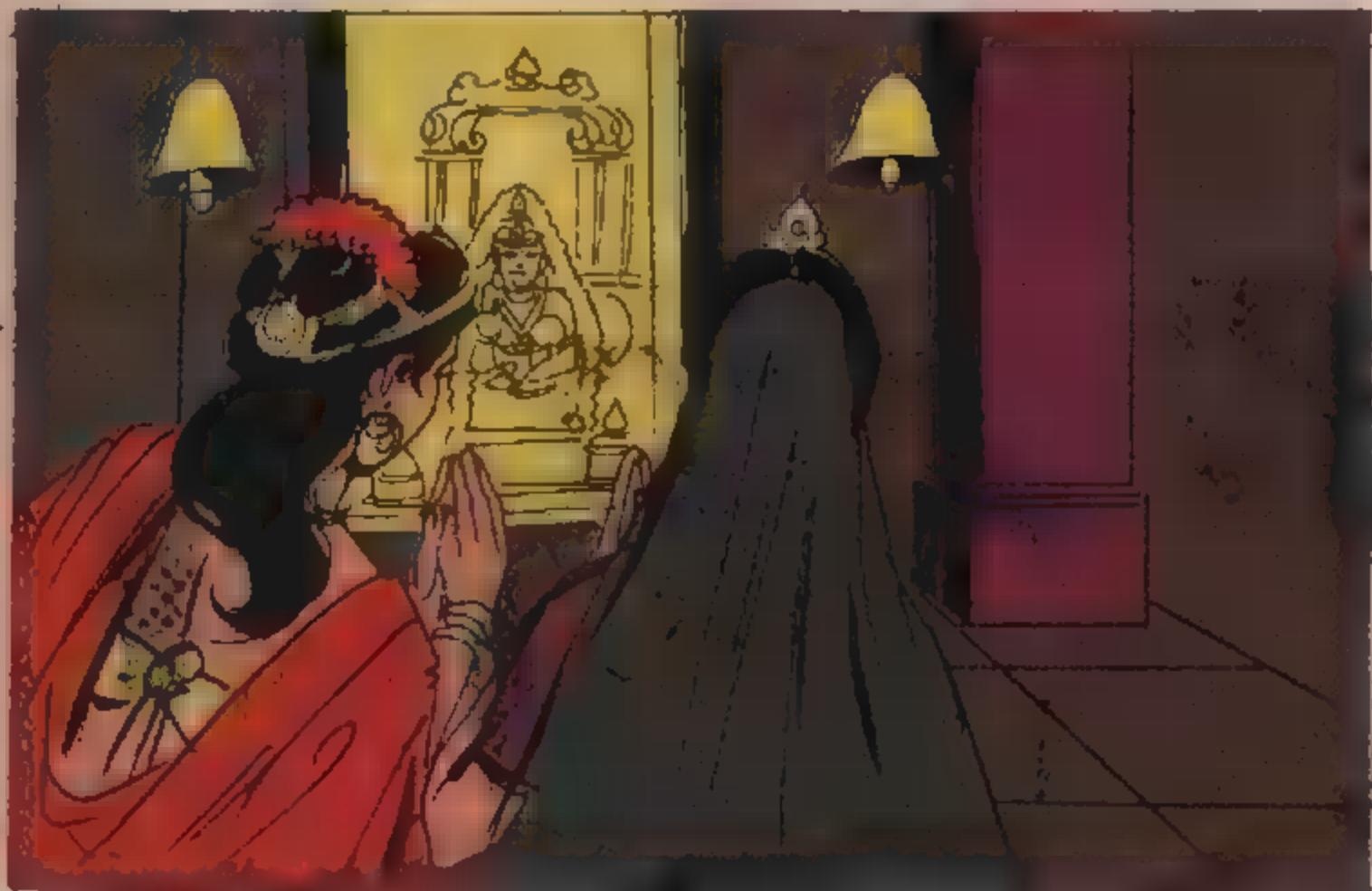


palace, the gatekeepers opened the gates wide and bowed low as the palanquins went past them. Vairamukhi had at that time lifted the curtains to watch the honour being extended to her. Four guardsmen walked in front of the palanquins and four others behind.

At the courtyard, Queen Suryaprabha and two maids-in-waiting received Princess Vairamukhi and Ragini. The queen was struck by the beauty of the princess, but more surprising to her was her face which looked very much like that of Vajreshwari. Suryaprabha had harboured a desire that her son, Veersen, would one day choose the commander's daughter as his bride. No wonder, she was drawn towards Princess Vairamukhi. She wished the

prince had been in the capital to meet the princess. Unfortunately, he was away on a visit to Saptagiri and Senapuri along with his bosom friend Vijaykrishna. She was not sure when they would be back or whether Vairamukhi would stay back in Veerpuri till they returned.

Vairamukhi and Ragini were led to their apartments and made comfortable there. Back in her chambers, the queen wondered whose daughter Vairamukhi was. King Kirtichandra of Mahendragiri had only two sons. Vinaychandra, who had succeeded him, had not married. She remembered that her father King Rudrapratap was once considering a proposal from Mahendragiri for her marriage to Yuvaraja Pratapchandra. But the marriage did not take place as



the prince met with an accident, and suffered physical disability for life. Did Kirtichandra adopt a princess? Anyway, Suryaprabha's anxiety was to ensure that Vairamukhi stayed in Veerpuri till her son returned.

On the first evening itself, Queen Suryaprabha accompanied them to a visit to the temple of Lokeshwari where special pujas were done in honour of Princess Vairamukhi. The next morning, the queen's maids escorted them to the Kali temple. The princess recognised the temple and its precincts where she used to sit in meditation and meet the devotees. That day there were no devotees waiting for their 'Mata' to receive her blessings. There was a sudden urge in Vairamukhi to sit beneath the banyan tree. She expressed a desire to rest for a while and was led to the platform built around the tree. Ragini got busy talking to the queen's maids and Vairamukhi was all alone for some time.

It was then that she heard the voice,

"Listen carefully, Vairamukhi. From now on, you must plan your moves for your next assignment. You'll get instructions from time to time. The king and queen are alone; the prince is away and will not return to Veerpuri for some days. This is the right time to strike. The commander is no more. If the king, too, is removed from the scene, there will be turmoil. Prince Pratapchandra would be able to settle another score—not with Veerpuri, but with its queen—if she were to become a widow. Remember! She was once about to be betrothed to the prince. She should be made to suffer for breaking the proposal. Strike! The act would be done by my men, but you would help them get inside the palace." The voice then trailed off.

Vairamukhi's face went aflush. The glow on her face was unnoticed by the queen's maids. But Ragini saw it and knew that some 'message' had reached Princess Vairamukhi.

- To continue



# A Sensational Success

★ Recently I found the idiom ■ the jackpot'. Let ■ know the meaning of this expression, writes *P. Parameswar, of Kusum Kuhure, Orissa.*

The chief prize, or the cumulative stakes in a game or contest is known as jack pot. When one wins the jackpot, one collects all the prizes, thus hitting the jackpot or making a sensational ■ In horse-races, if you successfully bet three or more successive races, you qualify for a jackpot, ■ and above the individual prize money.

★ Who is a 'peeping tom' ? asks *Ashish Kumar of Jagatsingpur.*

A peeping tom experiences happiness by looking at others from ■ hiding. The legend has that Lady Godiva, wife of Leofric, rode naked through the streets of Coventry, England, to ■ relief for the people from ■ burdensome tax. Someone who managed to look ■ her from a hiding very much wished to possess her, and he became the first ever peeping tom in history. Its simple meaning is, ■ prying fellow.

## WORDS, BOTHWAYS

- *R. GOPALAKRISHNAN*

Some English words display an interesting feature. When read from right to left, they prove to be words again, though different ones! Examples are :

ON	NO
PAN	NAP
TEN	NET
TOOL	LOOT
PLUG	GULP
REVEL	LEVER

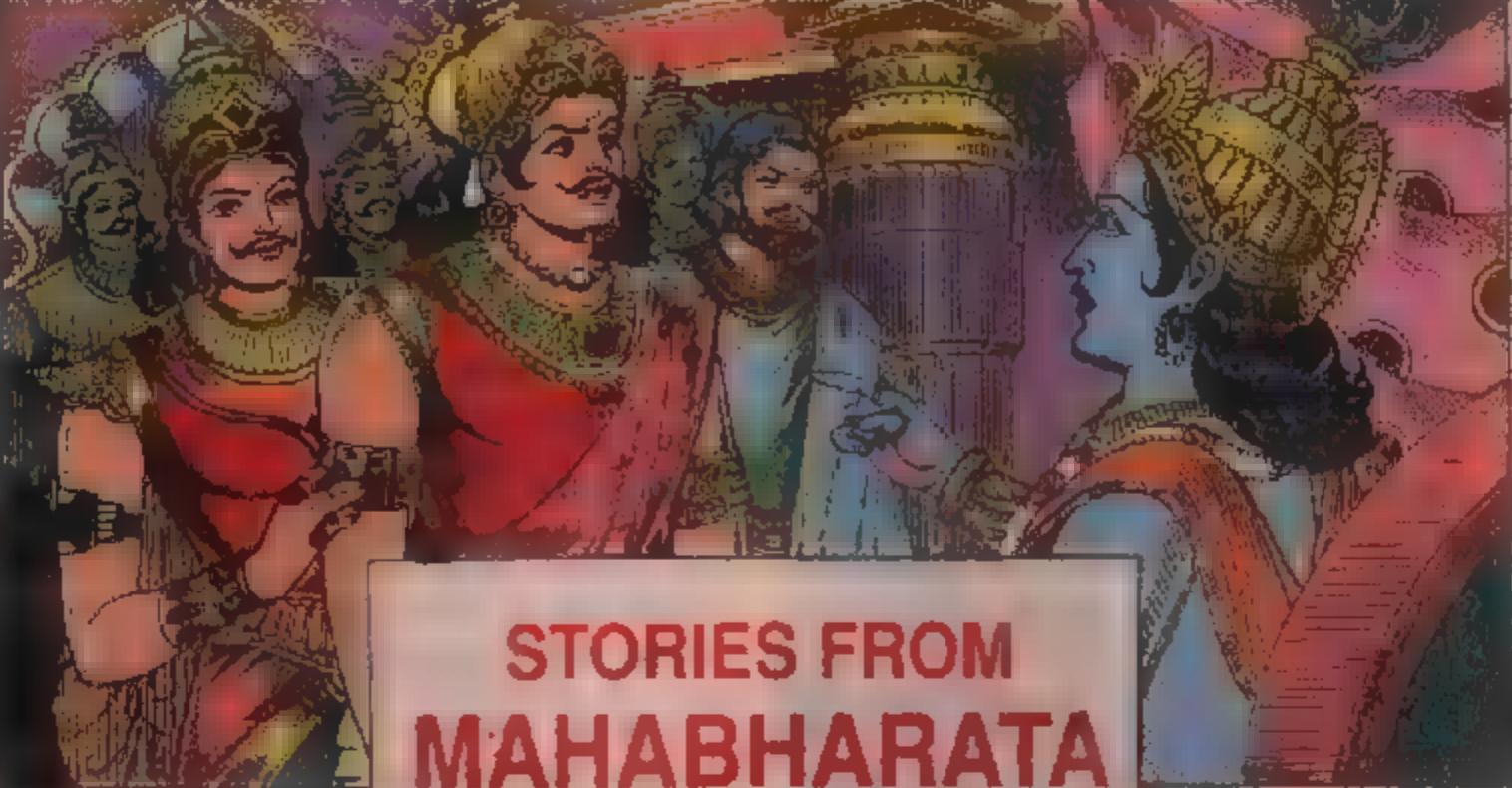
Such words are known as REVERSALS. It is an absorbing pastime to look for and collect 'reversals'. Below are given a set of incomplete reversals. An attempt to find out the complete words will be rewarding. Answers next month:-

1. \_EP\_ 2. -GR\_ 3. \_AR\_ 4. E\_O\_ 5. \_ R 6. \_E\_L\_ 7. \_E\_N\_

(In the September issue, *TELL-TALE WORDS* was contributed by *R. Gopalakrishnan*)

## Answers to "Add and Jumble" (August 1997)

1. SACRED
2. SOUTH
3. RAVENOUS
4. ANGER
5. DATES
6. ANGEL
7. MODEST
8. PLEASANT
9. MARBLE
10. AVAIL



## STORIES FROM MAHABHARATA

**The story so far:** On arrival at Hastinapura, Lord Krishna is received by a host of dignitaries. After a warm welcome at the Court, he drives to Vidura's palace to meet Kunti. He consoles the distressed mother of the Pandavas and assures her of a happy reunion with the family soon. When Vidura expresses anxiety about the inevitable war, Krishna smilingly says that he would strive his best to avert it.

Next day, accompanied by Duryodhana and Sakuni, he drives to the Court. He advises Dhritarashtra to impart good counsel to his sons and warns him of the consequences of a war which, if allowed to take place, might destroy the entire world. When none dares to express an opinion, Parasurama tells them how none other than Nara and Narayana have been born as Arjuna and Krishna.

Sage Kanwa followed Parasurama with more advice for Duryodhana. "Oh Duryodhana, make peace with the Pandavas and live in amity. Two strong men always stand together. Remember Maadali's example."

Then the venerable Sage related the story of Maadali.

"Maadali was the charioteer of Lord Indra. He had a lovely daughter named Gunakesi. When she became a comely maiden, her parents busied

themselves in finding her a good suitor. Not finding one in the land of the gods, nor even on earth, Maadali at last went to the land of the serpents.

On the way he met Sage Narada who took him to Varuna. The latter heard about Maadali's mission and sent him to the land of the serpents. There Maadali and Narada searched far and wide and at last chose a young man called Sumuka. Narada took Maadali to see Aryaka, the grandfather of the young man. The latter was



overjoyed to hear about Maadali's mission, but did not betray his delight. He said, 'O Lord Narada, how can I agree to this proposal? You know that Garuda has killed my son. He has threatened that next month he will swallow my grandson, Sumuka. As for me, I am lost in grief! How can I think of anything so joyous as a wedding in my present state?'

"Maadali pondered over these words. Then he said, 'Sir, do send your grandson with us, we shall take him to Lord Indra and make him immortal. Then Garuda will not be able to touch him. You can live in peace and happiness.'

"Aryaka consented to this proposal and so Maadali took Sumuka to Lord

Indra. Lord Indra was in deep conversation with Vishnu. When Maadali explained Sumuka's fear, Vishnu said, 'Indra, do give the nectar to Sumuka and make him a god.' Indra hesitated and said, 'O Lord, then you must give it to him.' Vishnu laughed and said, 'Indra, what are you afraid of? You are the Lord of all worlds. Therefore, fear not and I shall take care of Garuda.'

But Indra did not give the nectar to Sumuka; instead, he granted the latter the boon of long life. Thereafter, Maadali celebrated the wedding of his daughter and Sumuka. When Garuda heard about this, he went in a rage to Indra and said, 'Indra, how dare you keep me away from my prey? Don't you know how strong I am? I shall destroy you in a trice.'

"Vishnu intervened and said, 'Garuda, don't boast like that. You pride yourself in being my carrier. But in truth, it is I who bear you. Well, let me see you bear the weight of my left arm.' He then placed his left arm ever so gently on Garuda's back, and the latter found to his utter dismay that however hard he might try, he could not lift the arm even a little. Then he fell at Vishnu's feet and asked for forgiveness."

Sage Kanwa ended the tale and said, "Duryodhana, you will also meet the fate of Garuda. Lord Krishna has come here to protect you and your kinsfolk. Therefore, follow his

advice."

Duryodhana looked around, chuckled throatily and said, "Sir, why tell me all this? Let the events take their course!"

Then Sage Narada said, "O Duryodhana, very few in the world give good advice and what they say may not be palatable. Give up your pride and do what is just."

Even Dhritarashtra advised Duryodhana to listen to reason.

Lord Krishna said, "Duryodhana, what you seek to do is unjust. Do not listen to those who will fill your ears with evil advice. Make the Pandavas your friends and live in amity."

Lord Bhishma and Drona urged Duryodhana to make peace with the Pandavas.

But all this advice fell on deaf

ears. Duryodhana had shut his mind to all good sense and feelings of fairness. He complained, "O Lord Krishna, everyone blames me. Even you, who should be impartial, blame me for something I've never done. The Pandavas gambled their kingdom away and as a result went to the forest. Why should I give back the territory they so consciously lost? They have no right to any part of my land! I refuse to give them even a bit of ground that belongs to me."

Sighing in weariness, Lord Krishna exclaimed, "Well what do you want? War? I tell you once more, you have harmed the Pandavas a great deal. Therefore, live in peace with them, and give back their territories."

Flushing in anger at these words, Duryodhana strode from the Court



followed by his cronies. Then Lord Krishna turned to Dhritarashtra and said, "Now your race will be destroyed."

Meanwhile, a despicable plot was being hatched by Duryodhana and his cronies. They decided to detain Lord Krishna in the Court and do away with him.

So Duryodhana came to the Court with his soldiers and marched up to Lord Krishna's seat. Everyone in the Court became alarmed at Duryodhana's intention. Even Dhritarashtra protested against such an outrage. But Lord Krishna smiled and said, "Do you think I am alone? Why, look at all the people who are with me!"

Then Lord Krishna began to grow and grow and his stature increased to such an extent that he spanned the earth and the sky. He towered above

them all, resplendent in his Divine Glory. All the creatures of all the worlds were mirrored in his person; Brahma, Ekadasarudras, the Guardians, Fire, Sun, Gods, Gandharvas, Giants, Balarama, the Pandavas, the Kauravas, and every object — Earth and the Heaven was starkly revealed in his divine embodiment.

The combined radiance of myriad suns flashed from his towering personality, and the courtiers had to close their eyes, unable to bear the searing heat. Of those assembled, only Bhishma, Vidura, Sanjaya, and Drona were able to view that gorgeous spectacle without any fear. Even the blind Dhritarashtra was enabled to see this radiant vision in his inner mind through the benevolence of Lord Krishna.

— To continue



THEY STOOD UP TO THE BRITISH!

3

## VEERA PANDYA KATTABOMMAN

TEXT : MEERA UGRA  
PICTURES: GOUTAM SEN

THE PALAYAKKARS WERE POWERFUL FEUDAL LORDS OF TAMIL NADU IN THE 18TH CENTURY. THEY COLLECTED REVENUE FOR THE NAWAB OF ARCOT. THEY RULED FROM THEIR FORTS AND MAINTAINED THEIR OWN ARMIES. THERE WERE 72 PALAYAMS OF THIS KIND WHEN IN 1792 THE NAWAB OF ARCOT GRANTED THE RIGHT TO RECEIVE REVENUE FROM THE PALAYAKKARS, TO THE EAST INDIA COMPANY.

THE PALAYAKKARS, PARTICULARLY VEERA PANDYA KATTABOMMAN OF PANJALAMKURICHI RESANTED THE NEW ARRANGEMENT.

IT IS INSULTING. HOW CAN THE NAWAB MAKE US PAY TRIBUTE TO THOSE OUTSIDERS?

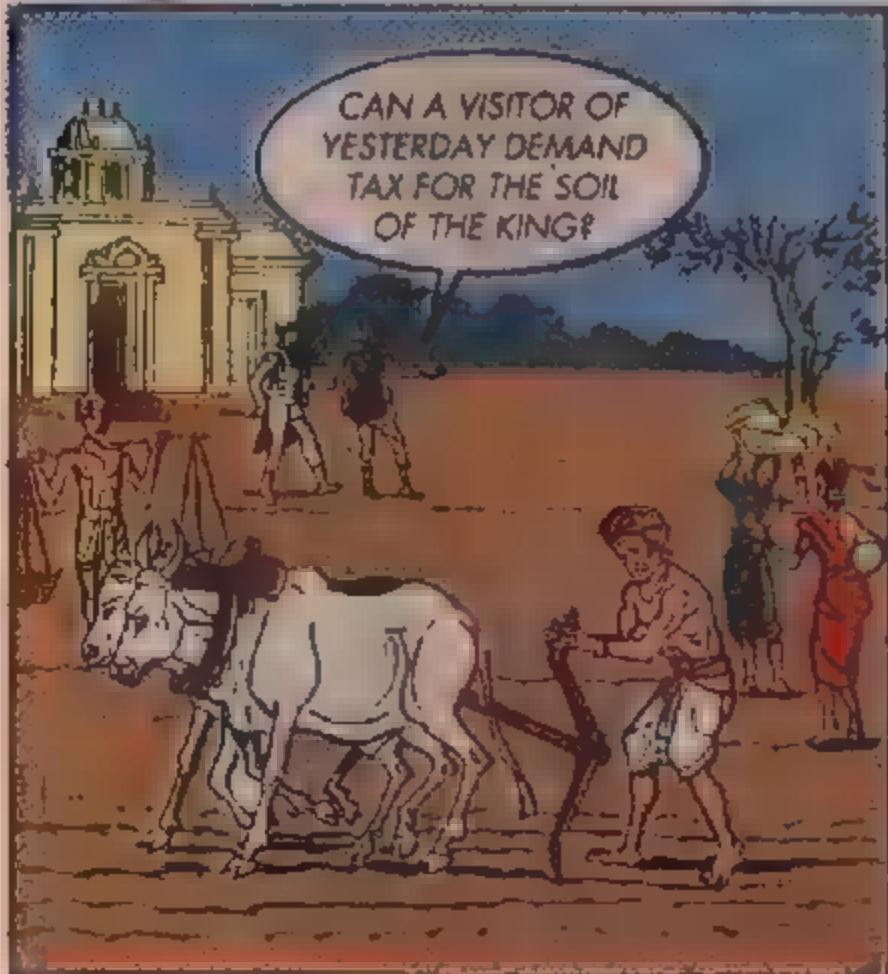


WHEN CAPTAIN MAXWELL CALLED ON HIM

THE SKY IS POURING; THE SOIL YIELDS. WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO EARN THE REVENUES?



CAN A VISITOR OF  
YESTERDAY DEMAND  
TAX FOR THE SOIL  
OF THE KING?



IF YOU ASK FOR  
ALMS, YES. BUT  
IF YOU DEMAND  
TAX, NO!



HOWEVER, KATTABOMMAN WAS PERSUADED TO MEET MR. JACKSON WHO HAD TAKEN CHARGE AS COLLECTOR OF NELLAI DISTRICT. BUT —

MR. JACKSON HAS LEFT ON TOUR. YOU CAN MEET HIM AT COURTALLAM.

KATTABOMMAN WAS MADE TO GO FROM PLACE TO PLACE FOR 23 DAYS.

FINALLY WHEN HE DID MEET MR. JACKSON AT RAMANATHAPURAM,

YES. WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO SAY?

KATTABOMMAN WAS NOT SHOWN THE COURTESY DUE TO A PRINCE. HE WAS NOT EVEN OFFERED A CHAIR.

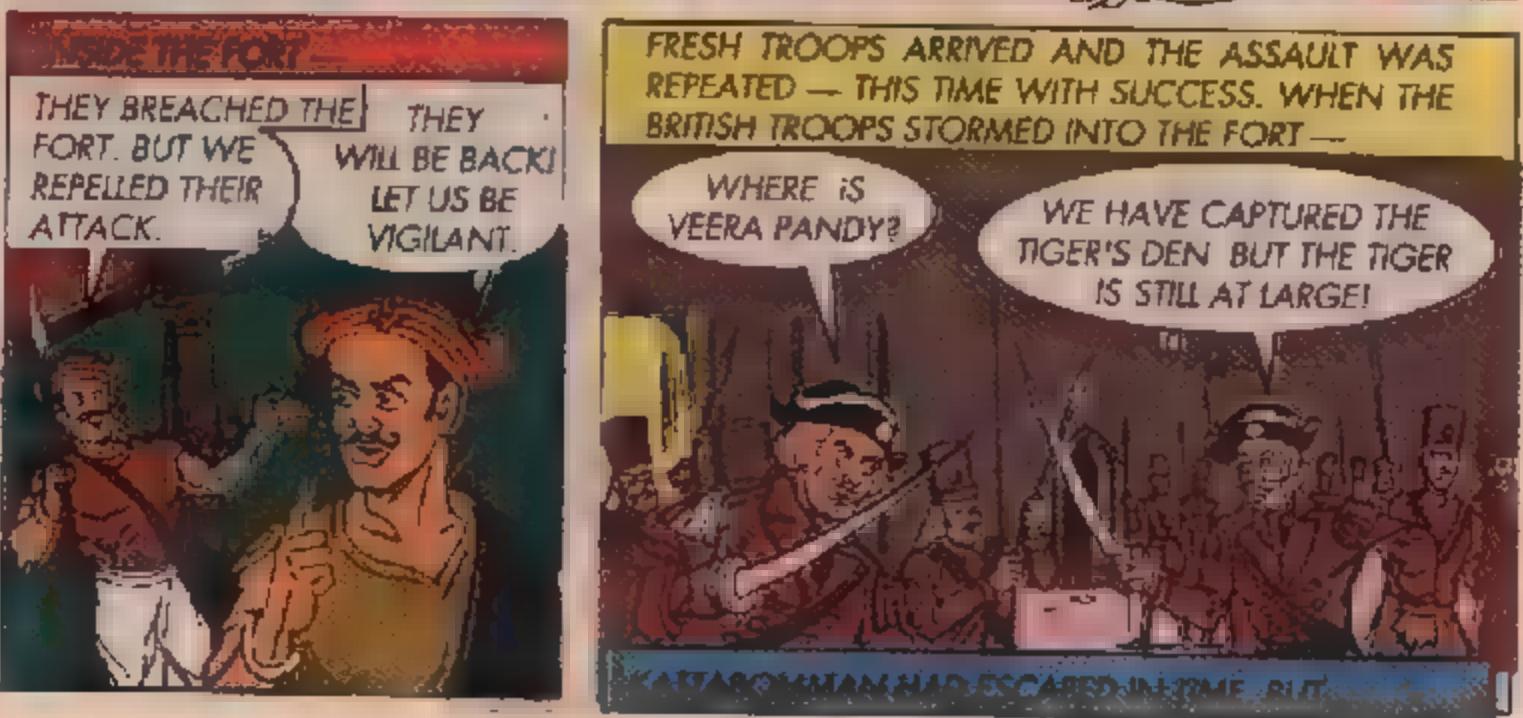
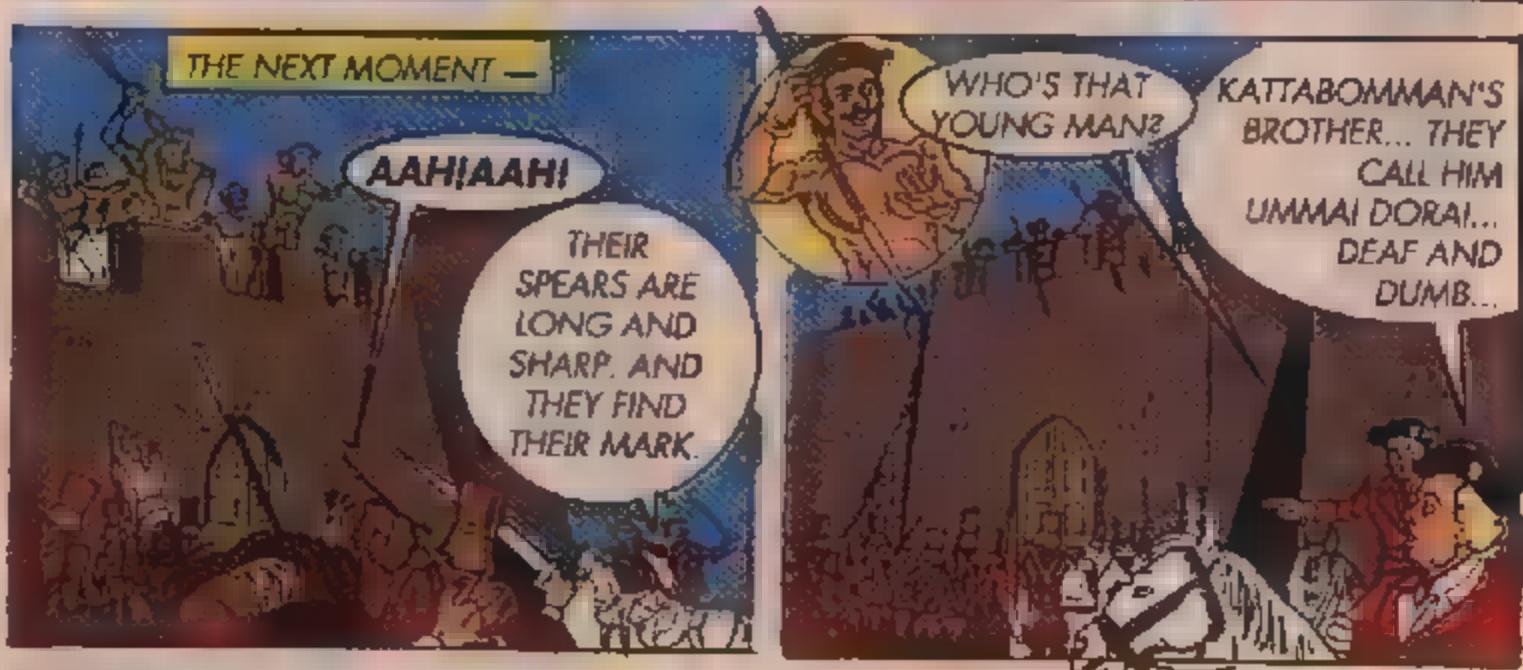
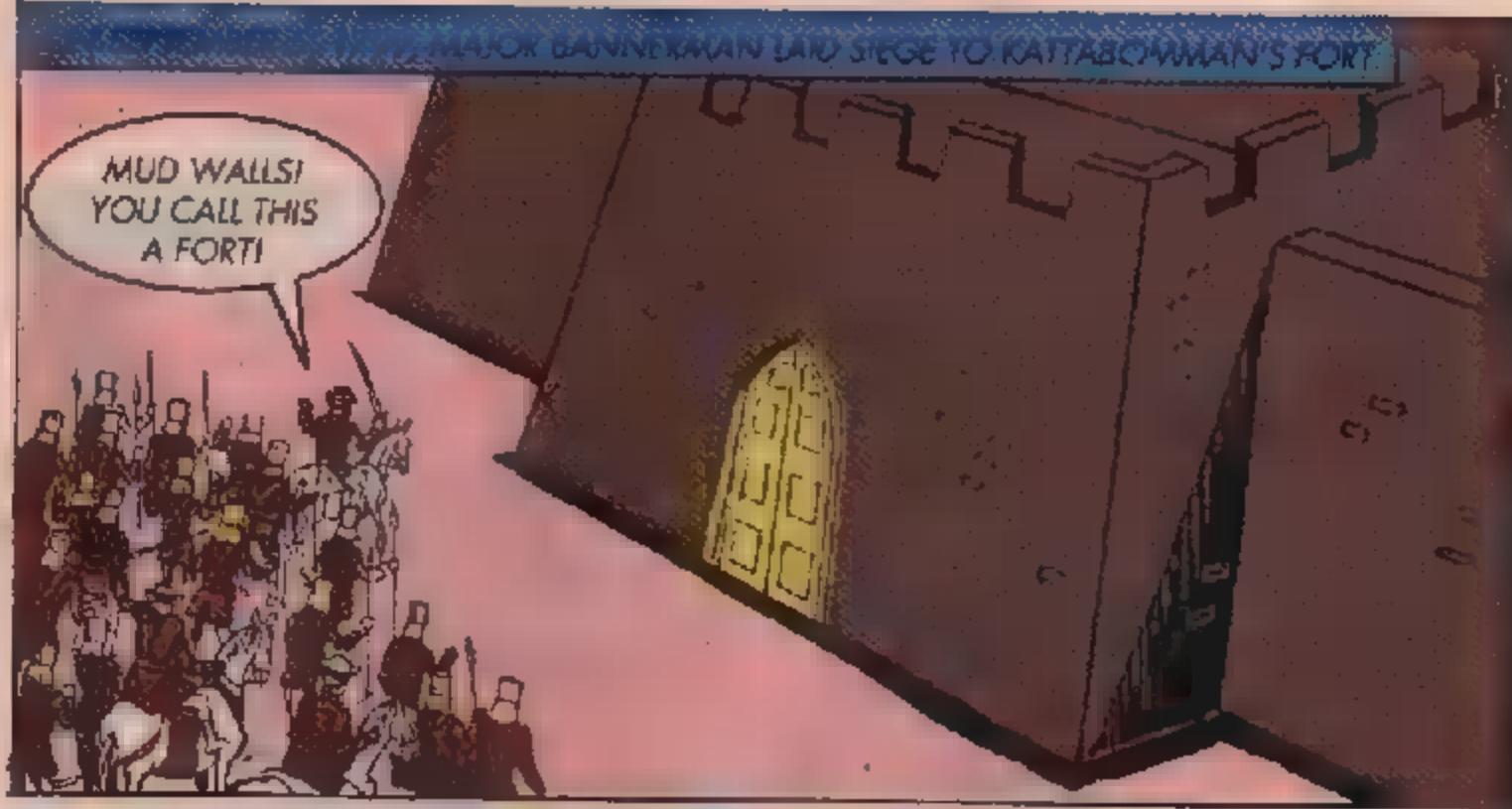
WHAT I HAVE TO SAY I WILL SAY WITH MY SWORD AND ON MY SOIL.

AS KATTABOMMAN LEFT IN A HUFF...

ARREST HIM!

CAN A PACK OF FOXES CAPTURE A TAMIL TIGER?

KATTABOMMAN AND HIS MEN FOUGHT THEIR WAY OUT AND SAFELY REACHED THEIR FORT.



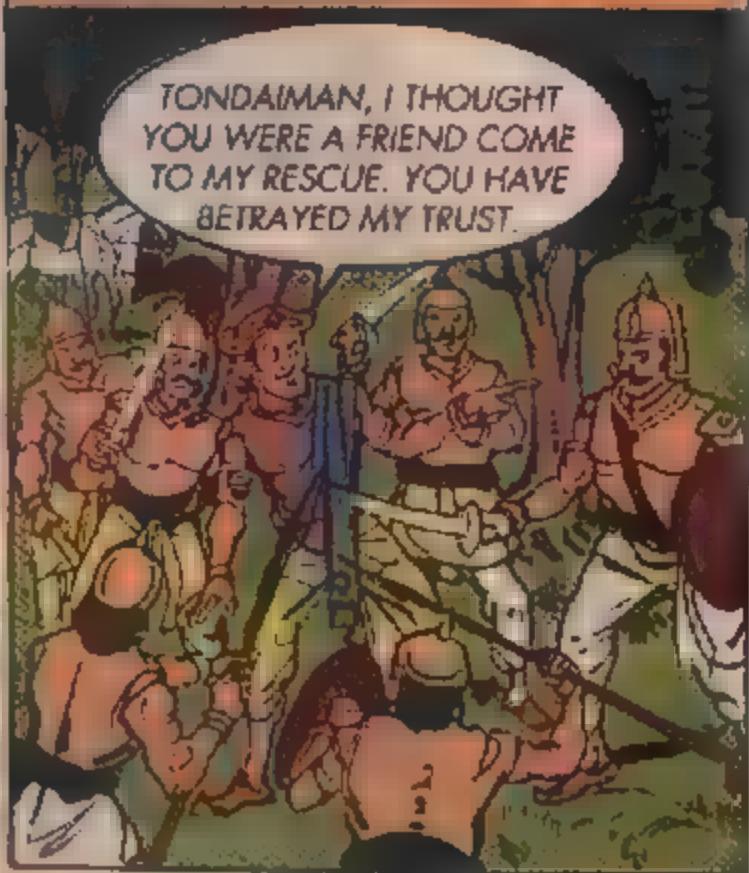
...NO PALAYAKKAR WAS WILLING TO BEFRIEND HIM.

YOU BECOME A STRANGER IN YOUR OWN LAND. AND STRANGERS FROM ACROSS THE SEA BECOME MASTERS OF THIS ANCIENT LAND!



KATTABOMMAN WAS HIDING IN A FOREST WHEN THE RAJA OF PUDUKOTTAI TOOK HIM BY SURPRISE.

TONDAIMAN, I THOUGHT YOU WERE A FRIEND COME TO MY RESCUE. YOU HAVE BETRAYED MY TRUST.



THE EAST INDIA COMPANY HELD A TRIAL AT WHICH BANNERMAN PRONOUNCED THE DEATH PENALTY ON THE FEARLESS KATTABOMMAN. HIS EXECUTION WAS ARRANGED IN THE PRESENCE OF ALL THE PALAYAKKARS. ABOUT HIS LAST MOMENTS BANNERMAN WROTE:

"HE WALKED WITH A FIRM AND DARING AIR AND CAST LOOKS OF SULLEN CONTEMPT ON THE POLIGARS TO HIS RIGHT AND LEFT AS HE PASSED."



KATTABOMMAN WALKED UPTO THE TAMARIND TREE AND HIMSELF PUT THE NOOSE AROUND HIS NECK..



# One step nearer independence

For the past 290 years, Scotland has been a part of the United Kingdom, ever since the Act of Union came into force in 1707. That part of the country used to send its representatives to the U.K. Parliament.

Soon after the Second World War, cries began to be heard in Scotland for its own parliament, if not independence. The Labour Party, which was in power at that time, lent a sympathetic ear to the demand. However, it was only when it came to power for the third time in 1974 that any serious thought was given to the wish of the Scottish people. A referendum was held in 1979, but it was set aside by the Conservative Government that came into power that very year, on the argument that only less than 40 per cent of the people had expressed their opinion.

In May last, the U.K. went for general elections, and the Labour Party came back to power once again (see *Chandamama*, June 1997). Prime Minister Tony Blair declared that a fresh referendum would be held in Scotland. Nearly two-thirds (74.3 per cent) of the Scottish people said "yes" in the referendum held on September 11 to the question whether they would have their own parliament. According to the present schedule, elections will be held in 1999, and the Scottish Parliament would come into being in 2000.

Three centuries ago, Scotland did

have its own parliament. Students of history will remember that England and Scotland were at war with each other in the 13th and 14th centuries. In 1328, England formally recognised Scottish independence. However, there was not much peace between England and Scotland. Rebellion broke out in 1638. The English General Cromwell, leading the New Model Army, conquered Scotland in 1660, which paved the way for its Union with England in 1707.

A section of people believe that the devolution of power will result in the end of the Union, and could become the first step towards independence for Scotland. Close on the heels of the Scottish referendum was another one in Wales held on September 18 to vote for a separate Assembly.

It looks as though by the turn of the century, the present United Kingdom will no longer be in existence.



# The Saga of 1857



*(The English East India Company, which came to India as traders and built forts with the kind permission of the Indian princes, grew terribly ambitious and began grabbing the country chunk by chunk. They arbitrarily declared the kingdom of Jhansi to have become theirs, because the King had died without leaving a son behind. They refused to acknowledge Nana Sahib as the heir of Peshwa Bajirao, because Nana was an adopted son. Resentment against the Company's conduct was growing stronger by the day.)*

**I**t was a moonlit night. A bright, strong and stout man in dazzling clothes and a diamond-studded turban stopped his horse on the banks of the river Ganga at the outskirts of Meerut. He then dismounted and waited under a large banyan tree.

Within minutes, some twenty men came out of the nearby bushes and sheds and greeted him with folded hands.

"You are most welcome, O noble

Peshwa," said the spokesman of the small crowd.

"Thank you, my brother, but if you truly welcome me, you have to desert your present masters. I do not accept empty words of courtesy," said the man, his right hand resting on the handle of his sword fixed to his waist-belt. He was none other than Nana Sahib.

The spokesman bowed to Nana Sahib. "We do not look upon the

feringhees as our masters. You are our master and we are at your service," he said.

"My lord, day after day we meet with nothing but humiliation. The feringhees abuse our gods and they also abuse the faith of our Muslim brothers. One day, one of us dared to tell their preacher that we view all faiths as genuine. We do not show any disrespect to their god. Why does he not leave us in peace with — faiths? But, my lord, do you know what the reply was? It did not come as words, but whips, till my friend fell unconscious, his back and cheeks bleeding," said another man.

"Sir, we have become sepoys because we have to earn our living. But even those of us who have, through their merit, become small officers, do

not receive one-fourth of the salary of the feringhee officers of the — rank. For how long can we stomach such insults?" complained a third man.

"Perhaps we could have kept quiet in spite of all such injustice. But now we have reached to the breaking point. The Company is going to force us to use the new rifle. Surely, it is not unknown to you that the cartridges to be used in these rifles are greased with the fat of cows and pigs. We have to snap the grease with our teeth. But, by doing so, both Hindus and Muslims will lose their religion," informed the next man.

"In fact, for nights together, the ghost of Mangal Pandey has been haunting me. I knew him well. He was brave and noble. His only weakness was he acted hastily. I hear his



spirit exhorting me — asking me to act in defence of my faith, to free my land from the clutches of the feringhees. What do I do? How long can we wait?" asked yet another agitated young man.

Nana Sahib was well-informed about Mangal Pandey. The cursed rifles with greased cartridges had been forced on his regiment at Barrackpore. They pleaded with their English officers to be spared of that particular brand of gun. But the officers proved deaf to their pleadings. After a sleepless night, the young Mangal Pandey, a dutiful and efficient sepoy, suddenly sprang out of his room and shouted for the other sepoys to come out in rebellion. But before the sepoys could understand what the shout was about, an English Sergeant-Major

named Hughson rushed upon him, trying to take hold of him. Mangal Pandey shot him dead. He was of course captured after another English officer had wounded him by sword. He was hanged, but his fellow-sepoys looked upon him as ■ martyr.

"My brothers!" said Nana Sahib gravely. "I salute our friend Mangal Pandey. Long live his memory. But, as you have said, he acted hastily. We must not act in the same way. If we do, there will be more and more individual martyrs, but will that serve our purpose? Is it not our purpose to get rid of the feringhees? We can achieve that only if we rise collectively, here, there, everywhere, on one particular day. Do you follow me?"

"We do!" they said in ■ chorus.

"Good. The date for the uprising is



fixed and you will be informed about it at the right time. Please wait," said Nana Sahib.

"Must we remain idle till then?" asked someone.

"No, not at all! You must go on persuading those colleagues of yours who are still hesitating! You must prepare yourselves for the great day, secretly discuss among yourselves and decide how best to act when the moment comes!"

As Nana Sahib stopped, the small crowd was about to raise slogans in his praise. But he asked them to keep quiet. "Do not underestimate the enemy. If they were not clever, they could not have taken possession of our land, coming from distant shores of the vast ocean. Some spy of theirs might overhear you. Remain cautious and alert."

They nodded and departed, bowing to Nana Sahib silently.

Nana Sahib had travelled to various places, meeting princes, chieftains, and people who mattered, mobilising their support for the rebellion he was planning. He sent his General, Tatyā Tope, and his minister, Azimulla Khan, to such places which he could not visit personally. His younger brother, Bala Sahib, was always with him, taking great care of him.

"Brother, you need some rest," said Bala Sahib, as the two approached their palace at Bithur.



"True, Bala, true, I need some rest," Nana Sahib agreed.

But some of his officials came running to him. They were excited. "My lord, the noble Maharani of Jhansi has arrived. She is waiting for you," they informed.

Nana Sahib forgot his need for rest. He rushed into his palace. Rani Lakshmibai came out, beaming with joy. She was about to prostrate herself before Nana Sahib when he stopped her.

"Am I dreaming? How can I see you here?" Nana Sahib asked affectionately.

"How? Well, that question was solved thousands of years ago. When Goddess Sati heard that her father, Daksha, was performing a great Yajna

she was eager to attend it, but Shiva forbade her to do so — she had not been invited. Do you know what Sati's reply was?" asked the Rani.

"No."

"That no daughter should ever need an invitation to visit her father's house. So far — I am concerned, I do not see any difference between a father's house and an elder brother's house," explained the Rani.

"My sweet, sweet sister, my only prayer to you is you should always treat this brother's house, wealth, and everything else as yours. What I meant was, you could have summoned me, instead of yourself taking the trouble of coming all the way."

"If this is trouble for me, how — I going to face those brutal feringhees? Surely, you don't expect your little

sister whom you yourself taught fencing and archery to be that delicate!"

The Rani had hardly finished when a messenger, breathing heavily and sweating, appealed before them and after bowing to them, said, "Rebellion has broken out in Meerut!"

"So soon?" exclaimed Nana Sahib.

"The Company compelled the soldiers to use the greased cartridge. They refused. A whole battalion was put under arrest, then all the sepoyys were handcuffed. They were punished with rigorous imprisonment for ten years."

"Then?"

"At night the other battalions revolted. They set the prisoners free. Then they set the houses of the feringhees on fire. The city is burning!"

(To continue)



# O, Calcutta !

Text : Meera Nair ■ Artist : Goutam Sen

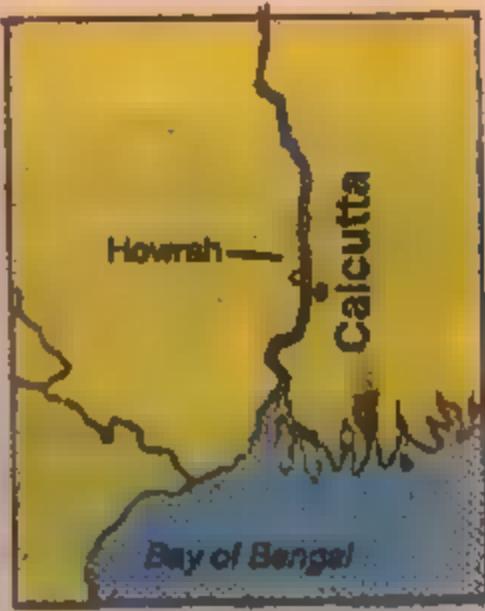
Calcutta, the capital of West Bengal is the second largest city of India. It used to be the capital of British India until the beginning of this century.

Calcutta's **General Post Office** stands at the site where the British had built their first fort. The fort was destroyed by Siraj ud Daula (the Nawab of Bengal) during the famous Black Hole Incident of 1756, when around 123 Britishers imprisoned in a small guard-room measuring about 6mx4 m are said to have died of suffocation. A black marble tablet at the northeast corner of the post office marks the site of this incident.

The British built another fort more massive and impregnable than the first one in the village of Gobindapur and named it **Fort William** after King William III. This fort was never attacked and has the distinction of being the only large fort in India from whose battlements no shot was ever fired in anger.

The jungle around the fort was cleared to give an open field of fire. The vast open area that resulted— about 4km long and half as broad — known as the **Maldan**, is one of the largest urban parks in the world today.

The famous **Eden Gardens**, where cricket matches are held, is in the Maldan. It was in these grounds that the **Calcutta Cricket Club**, the country's first cricket club was formed in 1792.



The **Royal Calcutta Golf Club**, the **Mohan Bagan** football club, which has the longest sequence of wins in domestic competitions and the **Royal Calcutta Turf Club**, which has the largest and longest course in the country are also located in the Maldan.

**Eden Gardens**



Chowringhee Street

## SIGHTS OF

*Chowringhee Street*, now called Jawaharlal Nehru Road, has the distinction of being the first Indian city to have been lit by gas lights, in 1859. Forty years later Calcutta became the first city in the country to go electric.

Shaheed  
Minar

The Victoria Memorial, which took 15 years to build was completed in 1921. Sometimes called the Taj Mahal of the Raj it was built in commemoration of Queen Victoria who died in 1901.

White makrana marble from Rajasthan was used in its construction.



Victoria Mem

India's first *underground metro railway* runs between Tollygunge and Dum Dum, a distance of over 16 kilometres.

Underground Metro Rail



Kali is the patron goddess of Calcutta. Close to the Kali temple is Kali Ghat. Nirmal Hriday, the home for the dying started by Mother Teresa. Clad in white cotton saris with blue borders, the nuns from her Missionaries of Charity work in the many homes, clinics and orphanages they run in the city.

# Calcutta

The 46 m tall *Shaheed Minar* was formerly known as Ochterlony monument. It was erected in 1828 ■ a memorial to Sir David Ochterlony who led East India Company troops against the Nepalese. There are 223 steps to the top.

*Nakhoda mosque* built in 1926 to resemble Akbar's tomb ■ Sikandra, is the city's largest mosque. It can accommodate ten thousand people at ■ time.



Nakhoda Mosque

*Writers' Building* where originally the clerks of the East India Company worked, was completely re-faced in 1880 and is now the state government secretariat.



Writers' Building

Mother Teresa



Tagore's house on Jorasanko Lane

Rabindranath Tagore was born at **Jorasanko House** in north Calcutta. He also breathed his last there. Tagore who was reverently addressed as Gurudev was awarded the Nobel prize for literature for his collection of poems *Gitanjali* in 1913.

It is fitting that the literature prize should have gone to a man from Calcutta because the people of this city pride themselves on their literary traditions.

The **National Library at Alipore** is the largest in the country with 51 kilometres of steel shelves that hold nearly 2 million books and manuscripts. It also houses the Ashutosh Mookerjee collection, the world's largest private collection of books.

Another of Calcutta's famous buildings is the **Marble Palace**. The palatial mansion and its ornamental garden was built in 1835 by a wealthy Bengali merchant, Raja Rajendra Mullick who had a passion for collecting works of art. The rooms and apartments are crammed with statues and paintings and other objets d'art that the Raja obtained from various parts of the world.

It is the private home of the Raja's descendants who continue the family tradition of feeding the poor everyday at noon.

The Marble Palace



# God's Will Be Done

## Part 3



**The story so far :** The King of Manikyapur is a poor man who walls over his fate. A firm believer in god, he argues that only god can change his fate. The king rests faith in man's power. In an angry mood, he despatches the poor man to Rakshas Dweep where a demon has been roaming, causing harm to people travelling on the sea. The man begins his exile, awaiting his doom. Rescue comes in the shape of a ship with traders. One of them, Manmohan, helps him to start a career. Soon he returns home, ready to face the king.

After Sivadas had relieved Manmohan's body ache by rubbing the mysterious diamond all over his body, the two became very close to each other. Manmohan was an experienced trader; he volunteered to initiate Sivadas into business. He gave the young man a few trade secrets and disclosed in detail his experiences. He told him what items met with great demand in which countries and where those items were available and at what favourable prices they could be bought. For Sivadas, all this was education. He never realised that

business and trade had their own ups and downs.

While they remained on board the ship, Manmohan even taught him how to read and write; and whenever they went out to survey the market in the countries they visited, he helped Sivadas to buy popular items and sell whatever they had picked up from their earlier visits. He made good use of the gold and precious stones he had collected from the Rakshas Dweep and judiciously exchanged them for goods which he sold at huge profits. He shared part

of his earnings with Manmohan as a token of his gratitude.

When the ship returned to Mangalpuri, Sivadas bade good-bye to Manmohan and proceeded to his own Sivapuri, which was part of the kingdom of Manikyapuri.

There were fifteen more days to go for Sivadas to complete six months of exile in Rakshas Dweep as ordered by the king. He bought a huge house and spent a lot of money in sprucing it up. He then collected all necessary household articles and provisions and appointed servants to look after the house.

He was now ready to call ■ the king. He bought some costly gifts for the king and left for the palace on ■ decorated horse-cart. When he arrived at the palace gates, he was told that

the king had been suffering from a tumour on his back and had been in bed with acute pain for two months. He also knew that the treatment till then had had no effect.

Sivadas immediately asked the driver to take him back to his residence. There he changed into silk clothes and kept with him the diamond with healing powers. He once again went to the palace where the soldiers took him to be a *vaidya* and escorted him to the royal chambers. The king was lying down on one side, groaning with unbearable pain.

Sivadas remembered how the king was laughing at him six months ago when he sent him to his doom in Rakshas Dweep, all because he had expressed extreme faith in god and would not agree to the king's argu-



ment that man himself can change his fate. He felt pity for the king, who had by now gone thin—almost like a skeleton. The king did not realise that there was someone in the room.

Sivadas went near the king with the diamond in hand. He placed it on the tumour for a few moments. Suddenly, there was no trace of the tumour, the king had stopped groaning, and he sat up in his bed when he found that the pain had completely vanished. He looked around. The queen, who was a witness to all that was happening in the room, pointed at Sivadas. "He has cured you of your tumour and pain! He's a great man," she told the king, as she helped him get down from the cot.

The king thought that he must be one of the rich men of his kingdom.

He could not recognise him—the poor man whom he had despatched to Rakshas Dweep. He respectfully folded his hands and said: "I'm sorry I don't remember you. Whoever you are, I shall reward you for curing me of my pain. You may ask for whatever you wish to have."

"Your majesty, you know me well," said Sivadas. "We had met six months ago just before you sent me to Rakshas Dweep."

The king tried to recall the incident. He then said, "Oh! That man who believed in only god? How come this dress?"

"If I am wearing this dress, it's all because of you, your majesty!" Sivadas responded. "You don't have to give me any reward. I'm even now that same man, though some changes



have taken place. But I shall tell you all that by and by. Now, you must eat some food which you've been avoiding for many days."

The king had a hearty meal after a gap of several days. He then anxiously waited for Sivadas to recount his experiences. "Your majesty, you'll need some rest. I shall come back in the evening," said Sivadas and took leave of the king.

He went back to the palace in the evening and found the king in the royal garden, hale and hearty. He sat by the side of the king and gave him all details of whatever had happened from the time he was left on Rakshas Dweep to his return to Sivapuri. "Your majesty, man is strong and powerful, but above him there's someone who controls man's existence. He's god and god's will be done. If He wills, He can turn a poor man into a wealthy individual; He can also make a rich man eat dust

and lead a miserable life. Aren't we examples of His power?"

"What you say is very correct," agreed the king. "I thought I could annihilate you by sending you to Rakshas Dweep, infested with a demon. However, you were able to survive on that island and come back alive. Not only that, by your own efforts, you've acquired wealth and wisdom. On the contrary, I was conceited about my power and authority and gloated over your fate. But I have been punished by god. I now have firm belief in the Almighty's powers. That realisation has come to me now, thanks to you."

The king then sent for Sivadas's family and gave them many gifts. Sivadas experienced contentment that he was able to reform at least one person. "You've changed your attitude, your majesty. That too, by God's grace!"

**—Concluded**



## THE LEPAKSHI TEMPLE



the temple is built on a hillock and is rich in its sculptural beauty. The western side comprises a pillared hall decorated with a host of figures of gods and goddesses. Paintings are found on a large scale on the inner ceilings. The figures are painted in vibrant red, yellow, and green and adorned with a variety of costumes and accessories.

Lepakshi is also famous for the seven-hooded coiled serpent carved out of a single stone. A lingam in black stone can be found in the temple compound. About half kilometre from the temple is the famous Lepakshi bull, Nandi, carved from a single red granite block. It is the largest monolithic Nandi in the country and speaks of the architectural excellence of skilled artisans.

The Vijayanagara dynasty built many temples of marvellous architecture all over south India. Thirteen kilometres from Hindupur town can be found the Lepakshi temple which dates back to 1538. The Lepakshi represents the pinnacle of Vijayanagara art. The temple has many myths and legends surrounding it. 'Lepakshi' stands for certain traditional art motifs. The temple



# Kausika

= A cock at night! =

Something strange happened to King Kausika every night. He would rule his kingdom with piety and kindness, but once he had retired to his bedroom at night, his face would grow pale. He would curse himself for his fate, because, at midnight, before the very eyes of his wife, he would turn into a cock!

Nobody but the queen knew about it, because by dawn he would get back his human form and come out of his room as if nothing had happened.

One day a famous sage, Galava, paid a visit to the king and the queen. The queen confided to him her husband's misfortune. The sage meditated on the cause of it and said, "In his previous life, the king was extremely greedy of cock-flesh. He would kill a large number of cocks mercilessly in order to choose one or two for his meal. One day Tamrachuda, the king of cocks, cursed him for his greed and cruelty. That is why the king suffers this embarrassment."

But the sage also gave the king the remedy. Accordingly, the king went into a cave and meditated on Lord Shiva. He prayed to Him that he be set free from the curse. The Lord's Grace indeed released him from his awkward fate—the life of a king during the day and that of a cock during the night! He was now ■ man all the time.



## THE MOST ANCIENT DICTIONARY



Dictionaries come in various sizes and languages. They give you the meanings of words, how they are spelt, pronounced, used, etc. The first English dictionary was compiled by Dr. Samuel Johnson and was published in 1775. It was called *Dictionary of the English Language*.

The oldest existing dictionary, however, dates back to the 4th Century A.D. Written in Persian,

it has 5,000 words and was prepared under the patronage of one of the Indian rulers, Badruddin Ibrahim. This dictionary covered various subjects, like medicine, geography, agriculture, flowers, animals, and many others.

A library in Baghdad in the 13th century A.D. had even still ancient dictionaries than this. It was, however, burnt down by the Mongol emperor, Chenghis Khan. This library burned for three days, and all the rare manuscripts were reduced to ashes.

## RAINBOW



## REGGAE

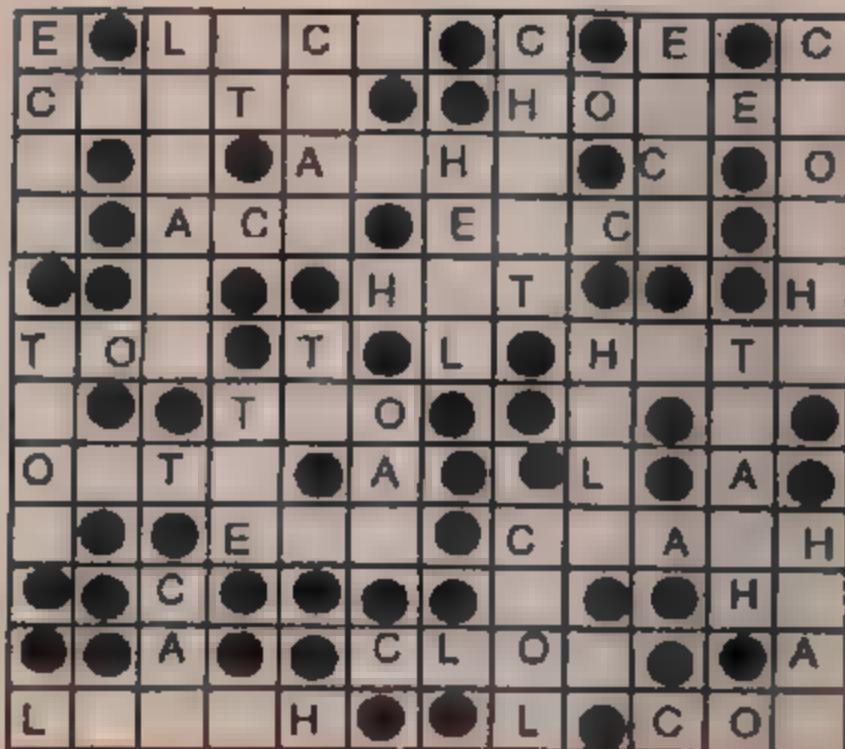
—Shital

Reggae is a kind of popular music. It began in Jamaica in the 1960s and quickly spread to other places where West Indians lived. Reggae has characteristic rhythm with a heavy beat on the second and fourth counts of every bar. Reggae words are in the Jamaican dialect and are often about Caribbean life and culture. Some reggae records are just a backing track with no vocals. This is 'dub' reggae. At reggae discos, disc jockeys play 'dub' reggae and 'rap' over it, talking fast in rhythm and making up rhymes as they go along. The late Bob Marley and other musicians have made reggae popular in many parts of the world.

# A *MERICAN PUZZLE*

©P.Ramad

Find 34 words from the single word  
**'CHOCOLATE'**

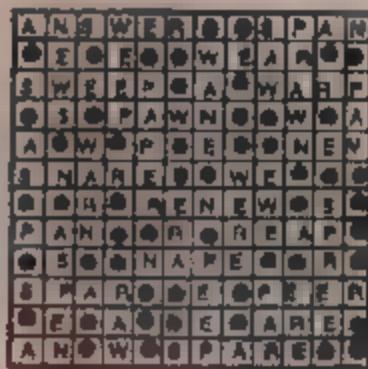


## Clues

2 letter words - 3  
3 letter words - 8  
4 letter words - 14  
5 letter words - 6  
6 letter words - 2

**Total words** ■

NEWS ■ solution



# CROSS WORD

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CONNECTING WORDS



Using the picture clues make connecting words

## A Stupid No More

**D**ark was the night and weird the atmosphere. It rained from time to time. Gusts of wind shook the trees. Between thunderclaps and the moaning of jackals could be heard the eerie laughter of spirits. Flashes of lightning revealed fearsome faces.

But King Vikram did not swerve a bit. He climbed the ancient tree and brought the corpse down. However, as soon as he began crossing the desolate cremation ground with the corpse lying on his shoulder, the vampire that possessed the corpse spoke: "O King, normally you should be enjoying a good sleep at this hour of the night. Instead of doing that, what makes you go through this strange ritual? Are you doing this at the instance of a learned person or a guru or a peer? What I mean is, none of them may be straight-forward and, therefore, you shouldn't have blind faith in them. To be frank, a selfish fool is to be feared less than an intelligent person with selfish motives. There are innumerable instances of people who had suffered at the hands of such people. There's a



sine example of someone who was stupid from his birth, but when suddenly he had a brainwave, he could even score over the person who was responsible for his intelligence." The vampire then began his narration.

In Bindupur there once lived a young man called Vinod. His parents died when he was a little boy. He grew up in his uncle's house. He was stark stupid. Even if one were to din into his ears, he would not understand anything. He refused to go to school and wasted his time roaming in the streets, aimlessly. Other youngsters of his age went to school and became successful in life; they entered government jobs or started business.

It's not as if Vinod did not have a

desire to make an earning, like his friends. He went about hoping that one day he, too, would get a government job. But for that, one must study. So, he decided to attend school. In the class, he did not suppress his stupidity and became a laughing stock of everybody. He ran away from school. Whatever that be, people found him a lovable person. That was because he was afraid of nobody!

His uncle had a daughter who was ugly-looking. He gave her in marriage to Vinod, hoping that the young man would become more responsible and would go for some work and earn his livelihood.

One day, his friends accosted him. "You always claim that you aren't afraid of anything or anybody," they ragged him. "All right, can you go to that old fort in ruins outside our village, and spend a night there—all alone? Remember, it's a haunted place, and none who had dared to go there had come back alive and safe! You must go there on the next new moon, and come back the next morning with some evidence of your having spent a night there. Are you game?"

Vinod was stupid enough to accept the challenge. If anything were to happen to him, the world would not lose much, he thought to himself. And he was not worried about his wife. Probably she would find another husband. So, he eagerly awaited the new moon and walked up to the old

fort. The door had fallen down, so only cobwebs were there to hinder his entry! It was pitch dark inside. He groped his way, touching the walls and taking cautious steps. He went from one room to another, though slowly. At one stage, he walked and walked, without knowing that it was a long corridor. There was no wall, only pillars. Suddenly he stepped on something round and was about to slip down. He stopped in his tracks, and knelt down to pick up the object. Yes, it was something round. He ran his fingers and palm on all sides. Though he could not see any part of the object, he guessed that it was a skull. He did not bother to guess whose skull it could be, because he felt he would not get a more authentic evidence of his having been in the fort. He desisted from more adventures inside the fort. He sat down, leaned against a wall, and tried to grab some sleep till the first rays of the sun broke through the cobwebs. He came out and went back to his house.

On reaching home, he managed to hide the skull from the eyes of his wife and her father. Later in the evening, he took it out and showed it to his friends. They were fully convinced that Vinod had really managed to spend a night in the haunted fort. In fact, they asked him to throw away the skull. Everyone feared that it might bring harm to

whoever possessed it, and they did not wish that any harm should come to their friend Vinod.

Anyway he did not heed their advice. He took it home and kept it in one corner of the almirah. That night, he woke up with a start. Did he hear a loud noise? What was it? Where did it come from? He looked around, and saw on the loft a huge uncouth human figure. His body was a yellow; his unkempt hair, beard, eyelashes were all white. The eyes were a burning red. Vinod kept his cool and just stared at him without taking his eyes off.

"I'm impressed by your courage and determination," the giant of a figure said. "Now that you've given me a place to live, I shall be at your command always. When there is no work for me, and if you happen to be free, we can spend our time chatting. On the other hand, if you are afraid of me, I would advise you to take back the skull to wherever you had found it. After that, I shall never again appear before you."

"Afraid! Me afraid of you?" retorted Vinod. "Not at all! But, tell me, who are you? And what's your name?"

"Oh! My name is Hunda!" replied the figure. "I belong to a group, in which each one is an expert in something or the other. I'm an adept in surgery."

Vinod was perplexed. He did not know how to accommodate a ghost in



his house. Fortunately, by then the cock's crow was heard. That meant dawn was approaching. The figure disappeared from the loft.

The next night Vinod could not get any sleep when he lay down in his bed. He was thinking of the ghost, wondering whether he would make his appearance again. He raised his eyes and looked at the loft, and there was Hunda sitting and smiling at him. He got down from the loft and suggested that they went out to the Devi temple nearby to spend the night chatting.

Soon, this became a daily ritual. Every night, Hunda would alight from the loft, and the two would go to the temple and sit there chatting

for a long time. One night, Vinod's wife saw him go out of the house and return after a few hours. She did not ask him where he had gone. But when she noticed his absence from home every night, she became curious. To her queries, Vinod gave truthful replies. He told her how his friends had thrown a challenge at him and how the whole thing had resulted in the visit of the ghost every night.

The woman was scared out of her life. "A friendship with a ghost? No! Please send him away! We may get into trouble!" she pleaded with him.

"If he wanted to harm us, he would have done it even in the beginning," argued Vinod. "On the other hand, he's now friendly, but if I were to break my friendship, who knows he might not turn against me? Against us?"

It did not take many days for Hunda to find out that Vinod was devoid of any intelligence. He tried to impart some knowledge to him, but nothing would enter his brain. One night, the ghost suggested that they played dice. Vinod got defeated again and again. Hunda disappeared suddenly. A bewildered Vinod went back home and slept. Was he dreaming? he wondered. Hunda was sitting by his side, holding a knife. Blood was dripping from the blade. Vinod thought his head was aching. He fell unconscious for some time. When he

recovered, he heard Hunda assuring him that there was nothing to be afraid of. "There's no danger to you. Your problem was that your brain didn't function properly. What I did was to operate upon your damaged brain. Now you're all right," he said. "In fact, you'll even be able to beat me in dice!"

Within a few days, Vinod acquired a lot of knowledge, thanks to Hunda the ghost. His friends were surprised when he did not exhibit his stupidity any more. He was answering them and conversing with them intelligently. To cut it short, Vinod succeeded in landing a job in the government where he rose to a high position. His wife was now the happiest woman in the world. She believed that it was all the ghost's doing, and due to her husband's friendship with Hunda. Their midnight meetings continued. One day, Hunda found him in a contemplative mood. "What's troubling you, my friend?"

"I got married when I was still young," explained Vinod. "How ugly is my wife! Still I don't hate her. I love her very much. I was only wishing that she could be less ugly. I might then find her beautiful. But what to do!" He then heaved a heavy sigh.

"Oh! That's all?" Hunda said. "I'll be able to make your wife a beautiful woman. You just wait. I have only to find a woman of the same age, height,

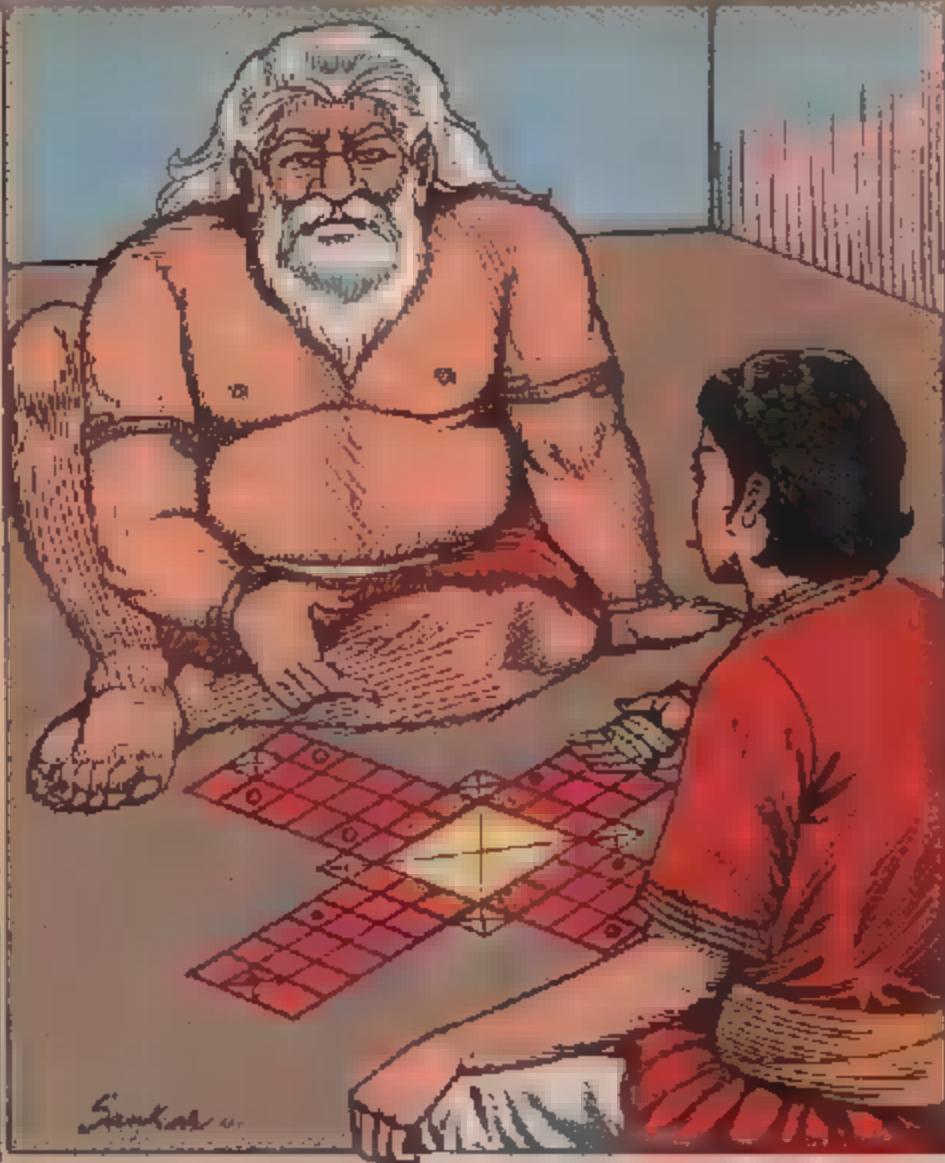
and complexion. After that, your wish can be achieved in no time! Let me try."

Vinod did not understand the significance of what the ghost had said. For the next few days, Hunda did not make his appearance. Then one night, Vinod woke up as someone shook him. It was none other than Hunda. "You now go and see your wife!" he said simply.

Vinod went up to where his wife was sleeping. He found a most beautiful woman on the cot. She was looking like a nymph. The next morning, when she stood before the mirror, she could not believe her own eyes. Vinod told her that it was all the ghost's doing. He was, however, surprised when he did not find her excited about her newly acquired beauty which she was afraid, might bring trouble for them.

A couple of days later, Vinod heard some shocking news. A woman had been killed in the neighbouring village and her head was missing. From the description given to him, Vinod surmised that it had some similarities with his wife's head. He also heard that the woman's husband was out searching for the murderer, and that the man might reach Bindupur any moment.

That night, when he met Hunda, he asked the ghost how he could make his wife a beautiful woman. "Just as I had repaired your brain to give you



"Nothing like that will happen, my good friend!" said the ghost, reassuringly. "Before anything like that happens, his head would have been stitched on to somebody else! So, why should you worry?"

"If that happens, then his headless body would be lying in his house, and the police would search for the criminal and catch hold of me!" wailed Vinod.

"Your imagination seems to be running riot, my friend!" remarked Hunda. "Even if that happens, I'll be there to help you and vouchsafe for your innocence!"

"You mean to say that you'll appear in court in my defence?" said Vinod unbelievingly. "You're a wonderful person! Will anybody believe you? A ghost? I'm afraid, the moment you appear in court, everybody would run away! That's what will happen."

"Anyway, why should you bother now?" said Hunda.

"Let him come, we'll find a way to tackle him. Meanwhile let's play a game of dice."

They played for some time and parted company. The next morning, Vinod took out the skull, put it in a bag, and carried it to the nearest cremation ground, where he dug a deep pit and buried the skull in it. After levelling the ground, he went back home, and coolly left for the neighbouring village along with his wife. He posed as if nothing had happened.

intelligence, I brought beauty to your wife. I had replaced your brain with that of another person. Similarly, I brought the head of a beautiful woman from the neighbouring village and fixed it for your wife."

"So, it was you who killed that woman?" said Vinod angrily.

"No, I didn't kill her," said Hunda the ghost. "Someone else had killed her; I only severed the head and gave it to your wife."

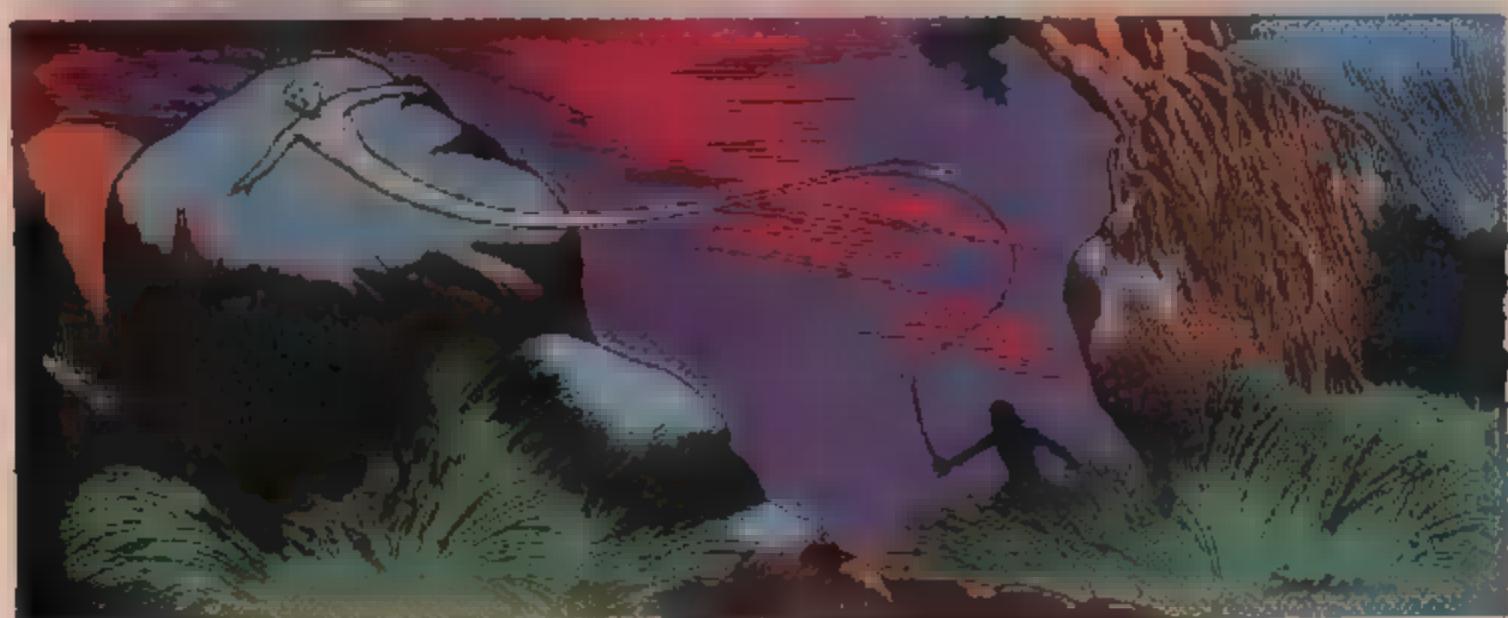
"I'm told that the murdered woman's husband is searching for the murderer," said Vinod, in a trembling voice. "He would certainly come to this village also. And if he were to see my wife, he might mistake her for his wife and take her away. That's my fear!"

The vampire concluded the story there and then turned to King Vikramaditya. "Oh King! Don't you find Vinod's action strange? The ghost Hunda went to his aid twice and promised his help once again. Before all that, even when his wife pleaded with him to forsake his friend, he did not heed her advice, but continued his friendship with him. However, on the third occasion, despite his assurance, Vinod broke his relations with Hunda. Wasn't it Hunda who gave him a brain and intelligence? Didn't Vinod benefit by it and secure a government job and rise in life? Don't you think that Vinod was being ungrateful to his friend and benefactor? If you know the answer and still prefer to remain silent, let me warn you, your head will be blown to a thousand pieces!"

The king was not perturbed by the threat, because he had ready answers to the vampire's posers. "It'll be wrong to brand Vinod as ungrateful. It was not as if his very

existence depended on the ghost and his hand of help. On the contrary, the ghost needed his company to play dice! But when he found that Vinod was a dunce, he gave him intelligence in his own interests. The moment Vinod realised that it was someone else's brain that he was possessing, he regretted his friendship with Hunda. Similarly, when he knew that his wife had been given someone else's head, he could not accept the gift of beauty for his wife wholeheartedly. When the ghost suggested that he would even change the head of the woman's husband, Vinod despised such an act for his sake. He wasn't sure whether that would not lead to greater harm to more people. That's why he decided to break his relations with the ghost."

The vampire had little doubt that the king had outwitted him once again. He flew back to the ancient tree, taking the corpse with him. And Vikram drew his sword and went after the vampire.



# News Flash

## No shocking matter, this

Children ■■■ always warned against tinkering with electricity or electrical appliances, lest they received "shock" which might prove fatal. Rajmohan of Quilon, in Kerala, was only 13 when he thought that life held out no promise for him and, therefore, there was no point in living. He tried to put an end to his life by climbing on to high tension wire and touching it.



He was surprised, because he did not experience any electric shock! He was soon to find out that unlike other ordinary human beings, he was immune to any shock from electricity. He then decided to use this phenomenon to make a living. Now-a-days he goes about exhibiting his 'talent' for money. What he does is, he binds his bare body with lengths of brass wire — of course without insulation —

and sends through them ■■■ much ■■■ 38,000 volts of electricity. A tester will show lightning-like sparks, but nothing will happen to him! In 1986, the World Science and Technical Institute of India in Delhi subjected him to a test. The people of the institute could not find an explanation for the phenomenon. In 1992, "Current Mohan", as he is now popularly known, got an entry in the Guinness Book of Records.

## Gold-en heart

Narendra Kumar of Punjab has ■■■ golden heart, literally. He went in for angioplast surgery in ■■■ hospital in Delhi to remove obstruction in the arteries. The doctors there used a 24-carat gold wire



mesh, weighing less than one gram, to regulate the blood supply to the heart. Normally, it is stainless steel that is used. Probably, for the first ever time in the

world, ■ gold mesh has been inserted into someone's heart to remain there permanently. Doctors feel that gold will absolutely have no after-effects and is thus safer than stainless steel. Narendra Kumar ■ thus one up on other heart patients.

### Off in the world

Ermy Melere (85) and Rita Gutsman (72) celebrated their mother Mary Louise Melere's 117th birthday in the hospital ward in Ontario, Canada, on August 31. The old lady — in fact, the oldest living human being in the world, now — was ■■■■■ that some merry-making was going on. But she did not know that it was her birthday, and that she has ■ place in the Guinness Book. Unfortunately she has lost her eyesight and may hear you only if you were to shout into her ■■■■■. Most of her relatives spread all over Canada and many of her friends had joined in the celebration.

Mary Melere's is an updated entry in the Book of Records. On August 5, 122-year-old Jean Carlement of Alse in France passed away and gave her place to Mary Melere. Jean's entry in Guinness was supported by her birth certificate dated February 21, 1875. Maria do Carmen Geronimo, of Brazil, celebrated his 125th

birthday last March. But Guinness has not recognised his claim to the title "oldest", because he has no supporting evidence.

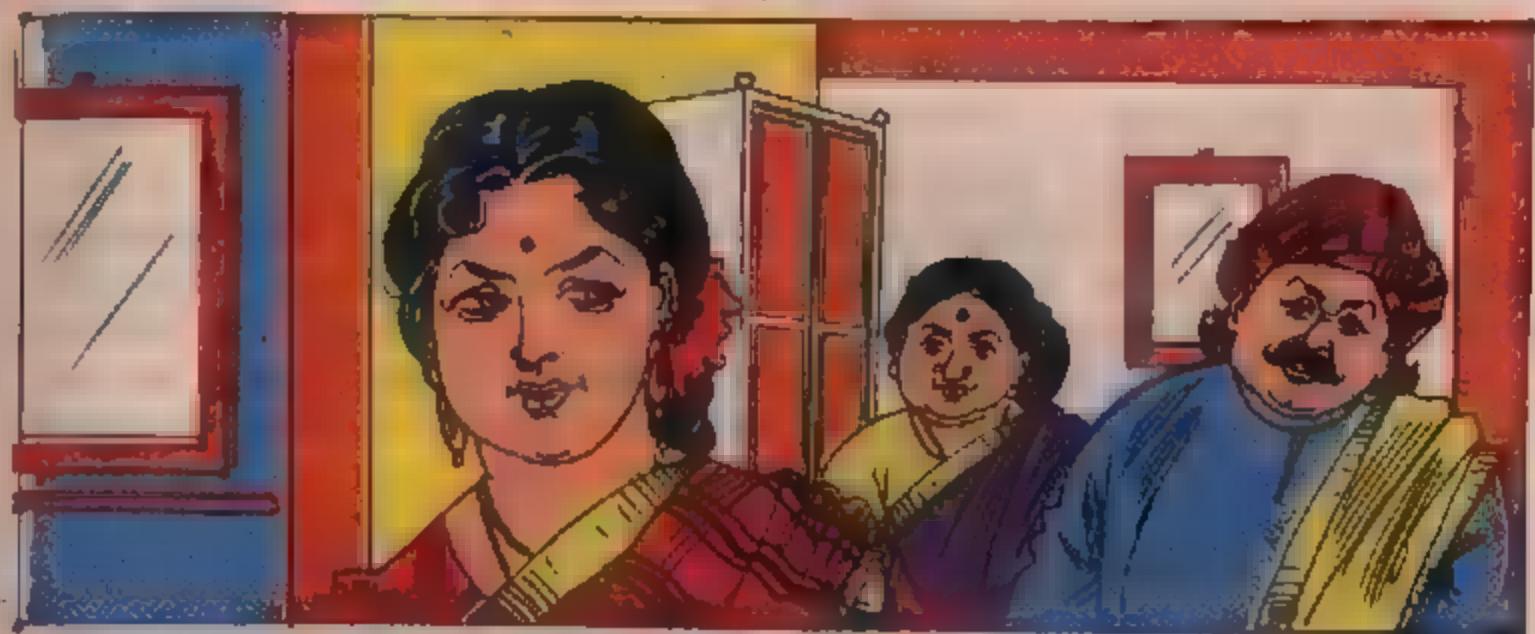
### New heights in records

Two Sherpas ■■■ out to rival each other. Appa climbed the 8,848 metre Everest for the eighth time on April 28 last. He was then accompanying a group of climbers belonging to the Indonesian Army. He is now getting ready to conquer the peak for the ninth time. But he will still not beat Ang Rita's record of ten conquests of Everest. His record is doubly unique because this Sherpa does not hail from Nepal. The first Sherpa to conquer the highest peak in the world, as you all know, was Tenzing Norgay. He achieved the feat in 1953 along with Edmund Hillary. Sherpa Appa's ambition is to climb the Everest six more times, thus creating a new record which Nepal would proudly remember for ever. He first climbed the Everest in 1989. Ang Rita, who had made it in 1983, has so far climbed heights 8,000 metres and above nearly 20 times. The traditional occupation of Sherpas is cultivating potatoes. But that does not bring in adequate income. This had prompted them to look for more profitable pastures - climbing heights as guides!

### OOT ESREVER NI

Didn't you take a full 30 seconds to read the heading? P.P. Raphael, who is an officer in Hindustan Machine Tools, Kalamassery, near Alwaye in Kerala, will read even a full sentence written in reverse order — that, too, not only in English but in Malayalam, Tamil, and Hindi. His other capabilities include writing from right to left, top to bottom, and bottom to top. He can also write with both hands simultaneously, from left end and right end, and from the middle to the left and to the right. Holding ■ piece of chalk each in both hands, he will also write words and sentences in two different languages at the same time. All before you can close your eyes and open them. He baffled ■ group of journalists in Trichur the other day when he held the newspaper upside down and started reading the lines! Raphael is still knocking at the doors of Guinness!

# LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON



**M**allika was the only daughter of Parvathi and Parameshwar. They showered all their love and affection on her. The girl grew into womanhood and reached the marriageable age. If she were to be married and sent away to her husband's place, they would be parted from her. This thought saddened Parvathi. "Can't we marry her off to someone who can stay with us, so that Mallika need not go away from here?" she posed the question to her husband one day.

"I, too, was contemplating something like that, Parvathi," said Parameshwar. "We must find a suitable young man, who would not mind staying with us." His search for a bridegroom who would agree to their wish did not succeed for some time. In fact, months went by. No suitor would

agree with their proposition.

Day by day, they became sadder and sadder at the thought of having to part with their daughter. At last they reconciled to their fate and decided to give her in marriage to someone in the neighbouring village.

After their marriage, Mallika and Madhav got ready to leave for his village. Parvathi and Parameshwar bade them a tearful farewell. Mallika, too, was overcome with grief and after every step she turned round to take a look at them till they went out of sight.

Mallika spent almost a month in her husband's house. She loved Madhav very much. However, as she had never been made to attend to household chores in her own home, she now found it difficult to carry out all the work given to her by her mother-

in-law. She expressed a desire to go back to her parents' place for a few days, and pleaded with Madhav also to go with her. A hesitant Madhav told her that she could go if she so wished, but he would stay back. Mallika did not mind going alone even if her husband was not ready to accompany her.

Her parents received her with affection, and for a couple of days she enjoyed her stay in her old home. Then she started missing Madhav very much. "Amma, I don't find any pleasure in staying here without my husband. So, I've decided to go back," she told her mother.

Parvathi and Parameshwar were surprised to hear that statement from their daughter, who had always been reluctant to be parted from them.

Meanwhile, back home, Madhav had started missing his wife's company. "I can't bear the separation any longer," he told his mother.

"It's not proper for you to go after your wife," said his mother. "It was she

who left us; we did not send her away. Let her come back. If you go, you'll only bring disrepute to our family."

Madhav did not pay any heed to his mother's advice. He proceeded to Mallika's village. On the way, he met Mallika who was returning to her husband's house. "I can't continue living in your place and doing all the chores," said Mallika. "And you don't like the idea of staying with my parents. So, let's not go to either place, but set up a home for ourselves."

Mallika's suggestion was acceptable to Madhav. Before long, he found a suitable house and shifted there with Mallika. Both of them visited their respective parents once a month. They, too, were thus happy.

"Madhav has acted just as I had wanted him to," remarked his father one day to his mother. "He has not gone and stayed with his in-laws. He would never do anything to bring disrepute to our family. After all, he is my son, isn't he?"



# Generous in his own way



Dhanapal was rich a man. He had two sons—Gurunath and Raghunath. After their father's death, the brothers divided the property and wealth they had inherited in equal measure. What each of them came to possess was enough for four or five generations.

Gurunath made full use of the riches he had come by. He made it a point to wear only silk clothes. Any one could approach him for help; he would never send them back disappointed or empty-handed. Soon, he came to be called generous-hearted and philanthropic.

On the other hand, Raghunath did not parade his wealth. Instead, he led a modest life. People did approach him well for help, but he would not so easily part with money. He would

put them several questions to find out whether they really deserved his help. No wonder, he was often branded a miser, unhelpful person.

In the neighbouring village lived Pasupati. He was not wealthy or rich, but led a contented life. He was honest and straight-forward. He had a son named Mohan and a daughter called Mala. Pasupati was anxious to give her away in marriage.

One day, his neighbour Anandshankar called on him. "My friend, Pasupati, I'm proposing to on a pilgrimage. I would like you to keep my ring when I am away. It's an heirloom, and I don't want to lose it during my journey. I would regret much if something happens to the ring, which is something most precious to me. May I request you to

keep it safe for me till I return?"

Pasupati promised Anand that he would keep it safe. He sure placed it in the trinket-box along with other jewels, but forgot to tell his wife about it. Next day, a party from a far away place came to ■ Mala. They liked the girl. The boy's mother then wished to see the ornaments Mala's parents had bought for her.

The would be mother-in-law was very happy to see the jewellery in the trinket-box. What attracted her most was the beautiful diamond ring. "Anyway, our proposal has been accepted, the wedding would take place soon, and Mala would come to our place. So, it is better that I take this ring with me even now."

Mala's mother was in a dilemma. For one thing, she had not seen the ring earlier. "Let me just ask Mala's father; you can then take it," she replied by way of an excuse.

The woman stood in the doorway. "It's a small matter, why should you bother him for that?" she remarked. "Anyway Mala will bring it along with her. I'm only taking it in advance. Come on, let's join the others."

Everything was fixed, and it was now time for the bridegroom's party to return to their village. The boy's mother coolly wore the diamond ring and went away.

A few days later, Anandshankar returned from his pilgrimage. He called on Pasupati and asked for the



ring. He went inside, and opened the trinket-box. When he did not see the ring in it, he asked his wife. "Yes, I had seen the ring, but I thought you had kept it there. When the boy's mother was examining the ornaments, she saw the ring and liked it very much. As Mala would anyway be taking it to her husband's place, she said she would take it away in advance."

Pasupati's face went pale. What excuse would he give Anand? He told him the truth. "I know you're honest and straight-forward," said Anand, "but I can't part with that ring. Please try to get it back within a fortnight."

"If you've another one like that, you may give it to me," said Pasupati



apologetically. "I shall take it to the jeweller and ask him to copy the design. I shall then exchange it for the original. I'm sure she'll give it back to me."

"A ring like that will cost two thousand rupees!" said Anand. "Can you afford that much?"

"I've set apart five thousand rupees for Mala's wedding," replied Pasupati. "I shall spare two thousand from it and make the ring. I very much want to return your ring. I shall get a new one made and get back the original."

"I'm sorry I don't have a pair," said Anandshankar. "However, I'm told that my distant relatives, Gurunath and Raghunath of Somapur, have similar rings. Guru is an obliging

type. He might give the ring to you if you were to make a request. But Raghunath is totally different. He's not at all helpful. It appears he would ask a hundred questions to convince himself before he even thinks of extending a helping hand. I would, therefore, suggest that you go and meet Gurunath first."

Pasupati called his son Mohan and asked him to go to Somapur. "You first meet Gurunath. If you don't succeed with him, then approach Raghunath."

When Mohan reached Gurunath's place, he found preparations going on for some special puja. Gurunath was busy, but the youth drew his attention. "I want to seek a favour, sir," said Mohan, "and I need your help urgently."

"I'm sorry, I don't have any time to listen to you," said Gurunath. "You've seen how busy I am. All right, you need some money, don't you? Here's ten rupees." He stuffed a note into Mohan's hand and went back to attend the puja which had by then started.

Mohan was stupefied. Gurunath did not even listen to him to find what he really needed. He was, therefore, reluctant to accept the money. But he did not wish to disturb Gurunath from the puja. He left for Raghunath's house.

Raghunath took Mohan inside and asked him to sit down. He also gave him a drink and made him comfortable. He then patiently listened to

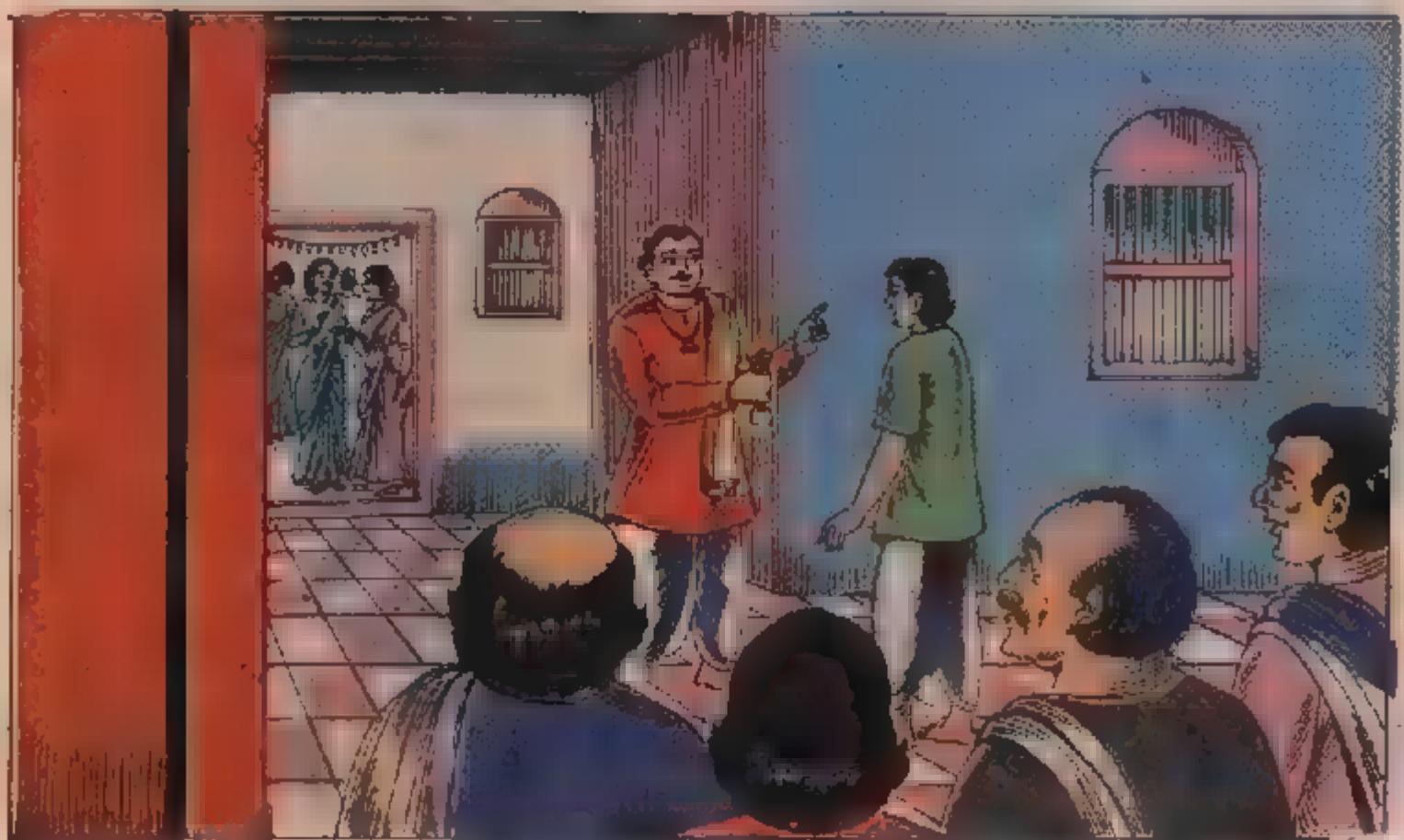
him, and asked him questions, seeking clarifications on several points. "Your mission is something very difficult," remarked Raghunath. "You've to act carefully in this matter. The kind of ring you describe is in our possession. Generations have been using it. In fact, I am now wearing it, after I inherited it as a heirloom. It is priceless, so, I can't hand it over to you. And there's only one jeweller who is capable of making a similar ring. He is Ratnakar of Chandrapur. However, he has not undertaken such intricate jobs of late. But I may be able to persuade him. Let's go to Chandrapur."

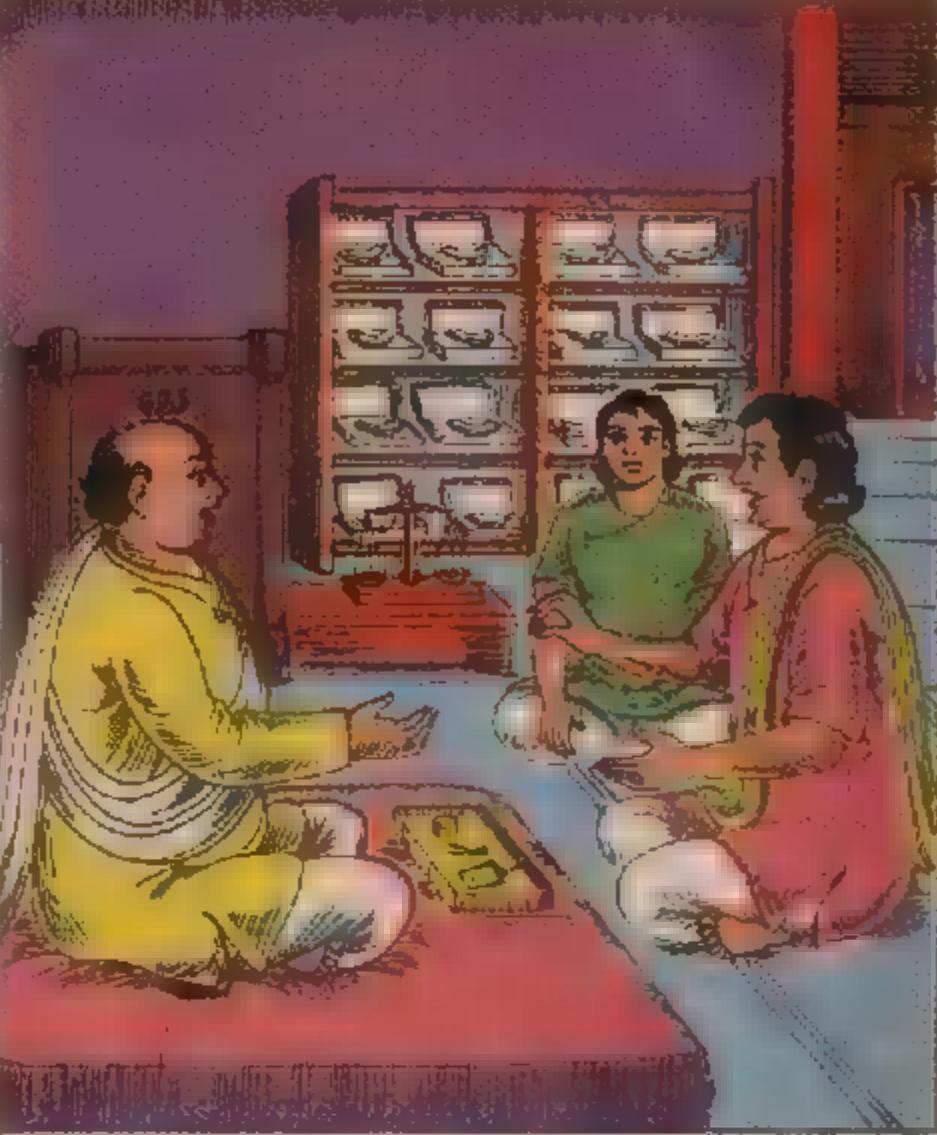
Mohan was surprised beyond belief. "But I haven't brought any money to undertake a journey or buy the ring," he said, adding, "I shall go

home and come back with enough money."

Raghunath thought for a while and said: "You said your father will spare money for the ring from out of the amount he has kept for your sister's wedding? But the balance will not be sufficient for performing the marriage. So your father may have to borrow from someone. All right, I shall advance that money even now. So, you don't have to go back home."

Would Raghunath be so obliging and kind-hearted? wondered Mohan. People took him to be a miser, never helping anyone if he could help it. They all must be wrong in their assessment of Raghunath, concluded Mohan, who now accompanied him to Chandrapur. Raghunath met all the expenditure of the journey. At





Chandrapur they met Ratnakar. Raghunath showed him the ring he was wearing and asked him to make one exactly like that. He agreed to make a ring within two or three days. When it was ready, he charged two hundred rupees less than what he had earlier estimated, as it was for Raghunath.

He did not send Mohan to his home with the ring. Instead, both went straight to the bridegroom's place. Raghunath explained all that had happened. He told the boy's parents, "The ring you took from Pasupati's house is not his. It was given to him by Anandshankar for safe custody as he was going away on a pilgrimage. It's an heirloom and it has to be duly

returned to Anand. Pasupati regrets the inadvertence on his part. He should have told his wife, or he should have kept the ring somewhere else. You must excuse him."

The boy's parents were happy over Pasupati's honesty and straight-forwardness. They accepted the newly made ring and returned Anandshankar's old ring. Raghunath and Mohan then proceeded to Pasupati's house, where Mohan explained what happened in Somapur and Chandrapur, and later at his would-be brother-in-law's house. Raghunath handed the ring to Pasupati.

Pasupati heaved a sigh of great relief. He expressed his gratitude by catching hold of Raghunath's hands. "Without hurting anybody or causing embarrassment to anyone, you've solved this ticklish problem. Not only that; you've even anticipated my predicament and helped me by paying for the new ring. I've a deep debt of gratitude to you, sir, and I don't know how to thank you for all this help and assistance!"

Raghunath released his hands from Pasupati's clasp and said: "We all should be helpful to others. By the grace of god, I've everything—food, a roof over me, and clothes—all that I need and something to spare for others, too. Please don't worry about the money I have advanced; you may return it whenever you find it convenient. I'm in no hurry. Even if you are

not able to pay me back, I won't take it amiss. I'll be only too happy that I could be of some help to you."

While Pasupati was shedding tears of joy, Mohan could not help speaking out! "Is it such a great person whom people call a miser, unhelpful, and all that? We all know that you and your brother inherited your father's wealth in equal measure. While your brother is leading a life of luxury, you're able to understand people's problems and extend to them whatever help you can, without being miserly about it. Yet nobody says a word in praise of you. This is what we can't understand!"

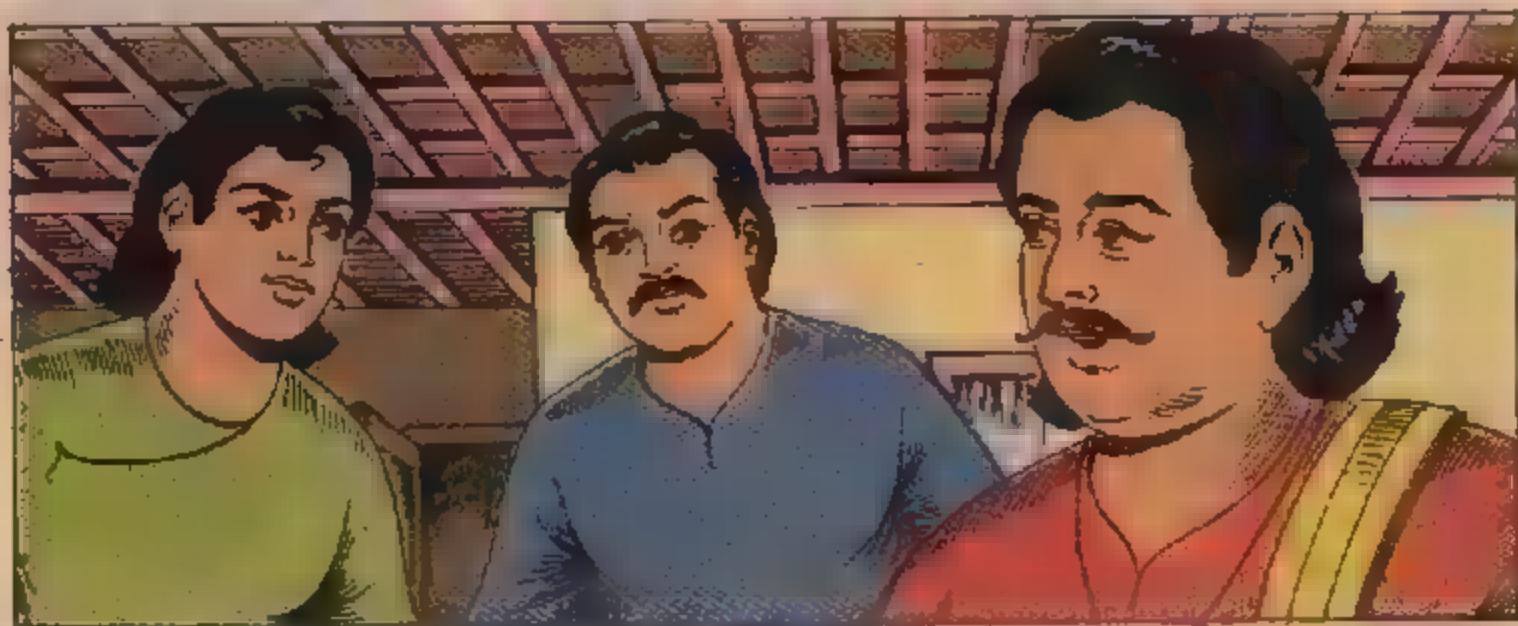
Raghunath merely smiled. "When people approach you for help, if you oblige them without finding out whether they genuinely need such help, they may of course praise you sky-high. But that will only attract more people with begging bowls, and there won't be an end to their demands. On the contrary, if — comes

across people with genuine needs, and extend help to them, one can really get satisfaction of having done some service. Such contentment is greater than praise or flattery. Whatever share of property I have received from my father, I'm bound to give it to my children. I cannot touch it for my own needs. That'll be met by whatever I — myself. That's my wish. Naturally, I've to be careful about the way I live and the way I spend my money. I have to live ■ frugal life. That's why I oblige only people with genuine need."

"You're ■ great person, sir," said Pasupati. "Your brother cannot be compared even to the dust of the earth. By the way, shall I arrange a vehicle to take you back to Somapur?"

"No, my dear friend!" Raghunath declined the offer. "I prefer to walk." He then took leave of everybody and went away.

"Could there ever be such a person?" was the remark heard from Pasupati's family.



# JUST ABSENT-MINDEDNESS

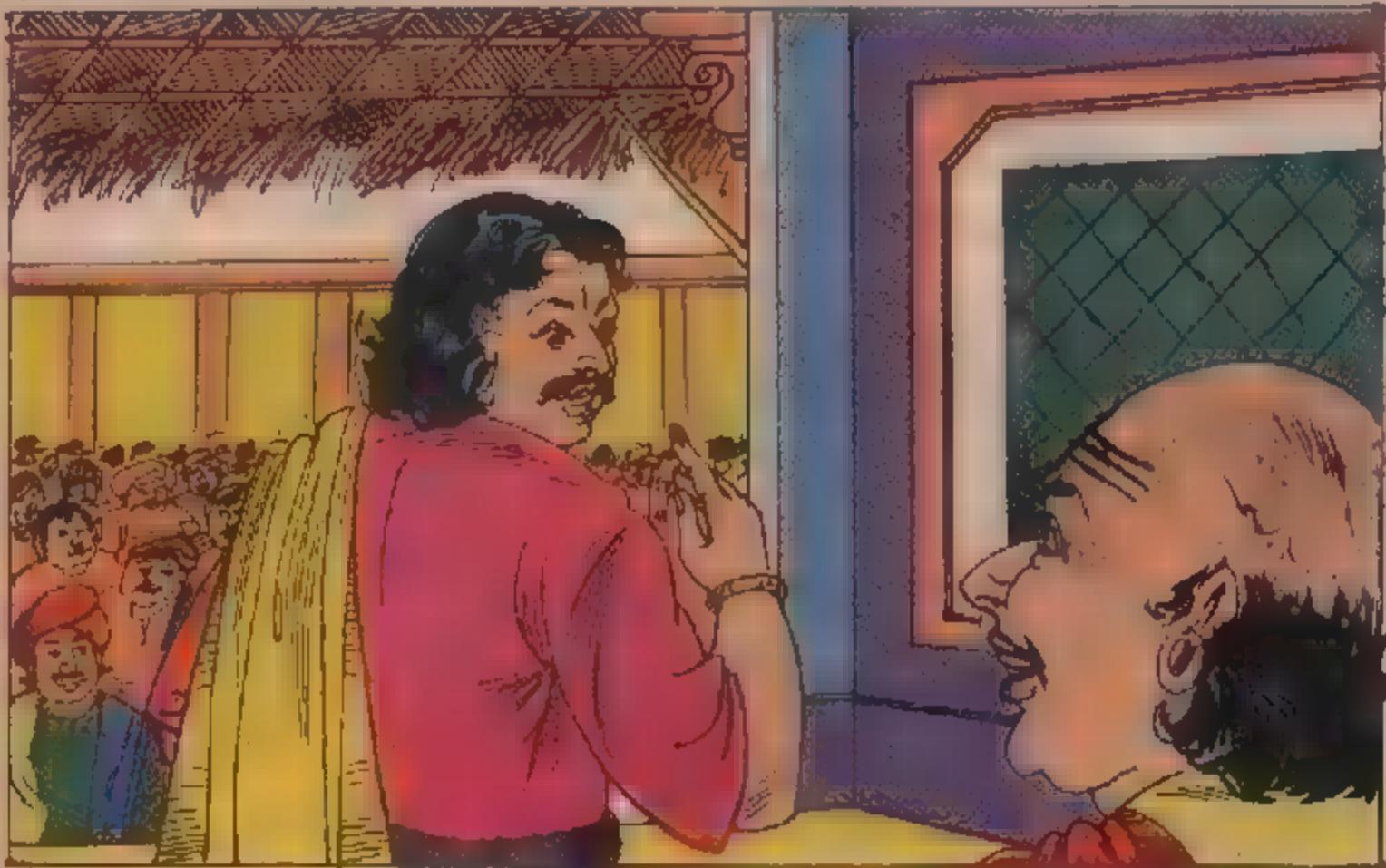
Ramashastri's religious discourses were very popular and used to attract large crowds. He would explain high spiritual ideas in simple language, which his audience easily understood. Other speakers were not able to put them in such simple, straightforward expressions. His only weakness was forgetfulness.

He would go from place to place to conduct religious discourses. At one place, an unusually large crowd was present. He began his speech: "Today is a very auspicious day, when we celebrate the birth of Lord Krishna. He is called the author of *Gita*. Whenever lawlessness prevailed, the Lord took an incarnation to set right things, to remove *adharma* and establish *dharma*. This is the dominant theme in *Bhagavad-Gita*."

He paused for a moment and looked around, as he thought he heard giggles and muffled laughter. It was then that he noticed people smiling to each other. He wondered what had gone wrong. He wanted to ask one of the devotees sitting in the front row. He spotted his old friend Krishnashastri. "Why are they laughing, Krishna?"

"Nothing important, my friend," he replied. "Today is Ram Navami. So, they were expecting to hear from you all about the avatar of Lord Rama. Probably you mistook it for Sree Krishna Jayanti. Absent-mindedness, that's all!"

Ramashastri joined in the laughter, before it died down and he could begin his speech once again.



## SPORTS SNIPPETS

### Ten in ■■■ year

Kendriya Vidyalaya in the IIT campus in Chennai (Madras) has a long distance swimmer on its rolls. Chhavi Madan (14 years) is the *only person in the world to have swum across ten international water channels in one calendar year*. She was among seven persons who were presented with the National Adventure Award by the Ministry of Human Resource Development in August.

### Channel swim despite handicap



when he swam across the English Channel (from Dover to Cap Girs Nez in France), to become the first Indian as well as first Asian to do so. He achieved this feat on July 28, when he covered approximately 21 miles (18 nautical miles)



Mohammed Masudur Rahman Baidya (28 years), of Calcutta, has no legs below the knees. However, this was no handicap to him

in 17 hours 6 minutes. Masudur had lost his legs in a train accident when he was only 11 years.

### World record to Indian

That was B.H. Bharati, who lifted 150.5 kg in the 48 kg category in the women's section of the World Junior Powerlifting Championship held in Bratislava in Slovakia, early in September. The earlier record (150 kg) rested with Yelena Yamskitch of Russia.

### Record-holder retires

Carl Lewis, of the U.S.A., has announced his retirement from track and field. The announcement came immediately after he won the Gold for his Santa Monica Club when, as anchorman, he brought success to his team in the 4 x 100 metres relay at the Berlin Championship

late in August. World sports used to compare him with the legendary Jesse Owens, of the U.S.A., who won four golds at the Berlin Olympics in 1936. Carl Lewis's tally is 9 Olympic golds, four golds in one Olympic Games, and gold medals in the same event in four successive Olympics. The world may not ■■■ an athlete like him for many years to come.

### Retirement of ■ different kind

The computer "Deep Blue", which beat world chess champion, Gary Kasparov, has been "retired". In 1980, the Carnegie Mellon University announced the Fredkin Award valued 100,000 dollars to anyone who built a



computer capable of beating the world Number One. Feng Campbell and Joseph Hone took up the challenge and built Deep Blue. In 1996, Kasparov won the first 6 game series. IBM engineers then re-assembled it, giving it a thinking capability with two times speed. The next series was won by Deep Blue. It

was Kasparov's first ever defeat in a series. The American Association of Artificial Intelligence handed the award to the two experts on July 30. Kasparov ■ invited to the meeting, but he was not present. He was bitter over his defeat. Anyway, Deep Blue will not be seen in action again.

### Three claimants

The "Golden Four Meets" comprised championships at Oslo, Zurich, Brussels, and Berlin. An offer of 20 kg of gold was made to anyone who would win ■ gold medal each in all the four meets. There were three claimants to this richest prize in track and field - Gabriela Zsabo of Rumania, Frankie Fredericks of Namibia, and Hicham El Guerroj of Morocco. Zsabo won the gold in 5,000m, Fredericks in 100m, and Guerroj in ■ mile race.



### Grand Prix crown

This year's track and field Grand Prix overall crown was awarded to

Denmark's Wilson Kipketer. The last of the Grand Prix Championships in Fukuvoka, Japan, ■ Kipketer winning the

800m gold in 42.98 seconds. Besides the 200,000 dollars prize money for the

overall crown, he received ■ bonus of 50,000 dollars for his win in the Fukuvoka meet. He had the distinction of breaking the world record in 800m thrice this year. Among women, Astrid Kumbernuss of Germany collected the Grand Prix award of 200,000 dollars at Fukuvoka, which ■ the last of the Grand Prix circuit for this season.





## LET US KNOW

**Who was the first woman Prime Minister in the world?**

*-M.D. Ziaur-Rahman, Manipur*

Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike of Sri Lanka was the first woman Prime Minister in world history. She became P.M. in 1960. Mrs. Indira Gandhi became Prime Minister of India in 1965, and Mrs. Golda Meir of Israel was P.M. from 1969. Turkey, Canada, Pakistan, and Bangladesh are other countries who had had women Prime Ministers.

**What was the first Capital of British India, and for what time did it continue?**

*- Manaswini Patra, Kusum Kuhure*

Calcutta was made the seat of Government in 1773. At the Delhi Durbar in 1911, King George V declared Delhi ■ the Capital. The actual shifting took place in 1912.

**Why do we need a visa to go abroad? What is its function? From which office can we get it?**

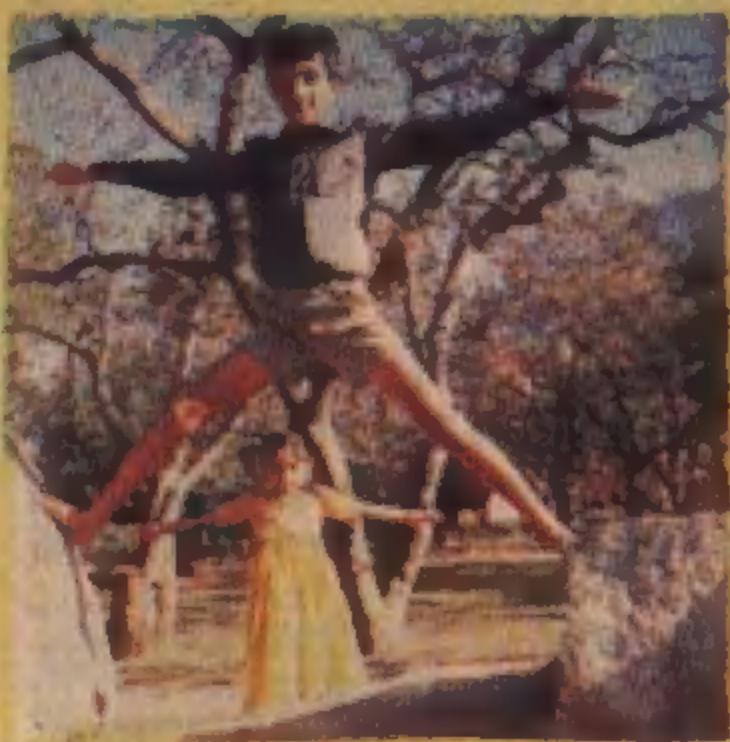
*- Sanjay Kr. Tiwari, Hazrapara*

Visa is an endorsement in one's passport to visit a particular country. A passport is a document which merely states that the country the holder belongs to has no objection to his travel outside his country. However, the holder needs a visa to step into another country. Most of the nations of the world have their diplomatic missions in Delhi and offices in other cities. An application has to be made to the mission or the office stating the purpose of the visit, the duration, where the visitor proposes to stay, and how the visitor will meet the expenses. If that country is satisfied with the statements, then the visa is granted for a specific period. Some countries give the visa separately, but most of them make an endorsement in the passport, by looking at which the authorities can know when one has gone out of his country, where, and for how long. Staying beyond the visa period is generally considered an offence.

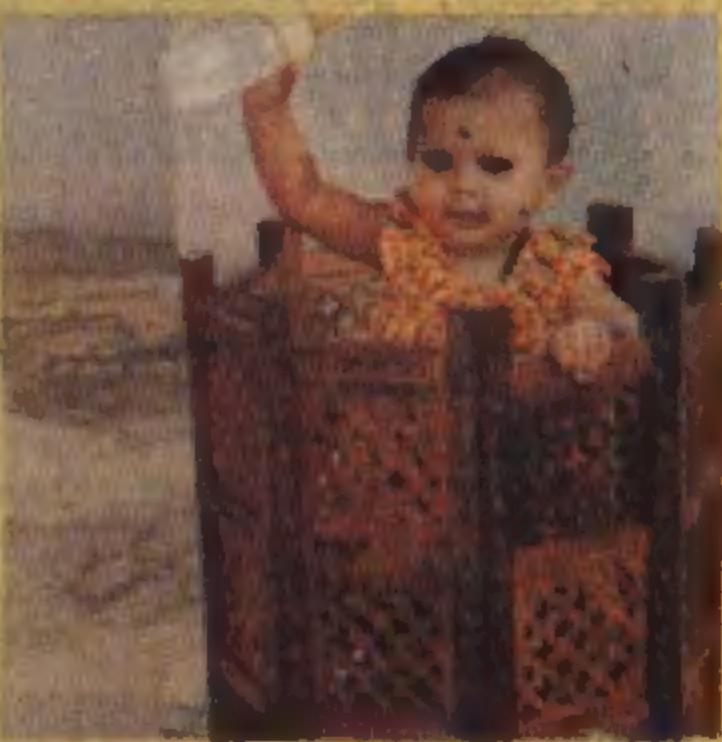
**CORRECTION:** The distance from Bangalore to Sravanabelagola (*Chandamama, August 1997*) is 160 km; the height of the statue is 57 ft. The Bastankinol Tower (*Chandamama, September 1997*) is 523 metres tall. The tower can stretch to 540 m and 74 mms because of heat. The lifts ascend to 500m; the rest of the height can be reached by climbing the stairs. The errors are regretted- Ed.



# PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST



MAHANTESH C. MORABAD



MAHANTESH C. MORABAD

Can you formulate a caption in a few words, to suit these pictures related to each other? You may write it on an ordinary post card and mail it to Photo Caption Contest, Chandamama, Vadapalani, Madras - 600 026, to reach us by the 25th of the current month. A reward of Rs. 100/- will go to the best entry which will be published in the issue after the next.

The Prize for August 1997 goes to :-

**Misa Karuna Kumar**

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